

THE DIAL

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THE NEW SONG

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Translated From the German by Kenneth Burke

"I AM not to blame for that, Herr von Breiteneder . . . if you will allow me, no one can say that!" Karl Breiteneder heard these words as though from a long distance, and yet he knew well enough that the man who spoke them was walking along right here beside him—yes, he even caught the fumes of wine that the words were wrapped in. But he made no answer. It wouldn't do for him to get involved in explanations. He was too tired and shaken up by the frightful experience of last night, and he just wanted to be left alone in the fresh air. For this reason he had not gone home, but preferred to walk the breezy, deserted streets in the morning, out into the open country, towards the wooded hills towering above the light May mists. But one shudder after another ran through him from head to foot, and he felt none of the exhilarating freshness which had in the past set him tingling in the spring air after a sleepless night. He kept continually seeing the horrible picture that he had fled from.

The man beside him must have just caught up with him. What did he want of him? Why was he defending himself? He had had no thought of openly accusing old Rebay, even though he was perfectly aware that this man was chiefly responsible for what had happened. He gave him a sidelong glance. The black overcoat was rumpled and spotted; one button was missing, the others were nicked. A dead flower was hanging by its stem from one button-hole. Last evening Karl had seen this flower when it was still

fresh. Adorned with this same arnation, the band-master Rebay had sat at the jangling piano and ground out the music for the various productions of the Ladenbauer Company, just as he had been doing for the last thirty years. The little inn had been packed; the tables and chairs extended even to the garden—for to-day, as it said on large yellow posters with black and red letters, was the "first reappearance, after her recovery, of Fräulein Maria Ladenbauer, known as the 'white blackbird.'"

Karl took a deep breath. It had become quite light; for some time now others had been on the street besides him and the band-master. Pedestrians approached from behind, or came in from the side-streets, or even down towards them from the woods. For the first time it occurred to Karl that this was Sunday. He was glad that he had no engagements to take him back to the city, although his father would have overlooked his absence on a week day too, as he had often done before. The old machine shop in the Alserstrasse was for the present getting along without him; and his father knew from experience that the Breiteneders always settled down when the time came. But the affair with Marie Ladenbauer had never seemed to him quite right. "You can do as you please," he once said quietly to Karl. "I was young once . . . but I never had anything to do with my girls' families! I thought too much of myself for that."

If he had listened to his father—Karl thought now—then he would have been spared many things. But he had been very fond of Marie. She was a good-natured creature, she clung to him, she was not talkative; and when she went for a walk with him arm in arm, no one would have taken her for a person who had been through so much. Besides, everything was just as respectable at her parents' as in any middle-class home. The house was kept clean, books stood on the shelves; often old Ladenbauer's brother, who was a city official, came for a visit, and then very serious matters were discussed: politics, elections, and local conditions. Frequently on Sunday Karl played tarots upstairs with old Ladenbauer and crazy Jedek, this same Jedek who in the evenings executed waltzes and marches on the edges of glasses and plates. And if he won, his money was paid out to him on the spot, which was certainly not always the case at the café. In the alcove by the window, before which hung crystallotypes with Swiss land-

scapes, sat the pale lanky Frau Jedek who in the evening on the stage recited tiresome poems; she would chat with Marie and keep nodding almost continually. But Marie would glance across at Karl, wave at him playfully, or sit down next him and look into his cards. Her brother was employed by a large firm; and when Karl gave him a cigar he would come right back with another. Also, occasionally he would bring something to eat from a downtown confectioner's for his sister, whom he adored. And when he was about to leave, he would say with his eyes half closed, "Unfortunately I have another engagement. . . ." Of course, Karl preferred most to be alone with Marie. And he thought of the morning when he had gone with her over the same road which he was now taking, out towards the softly rustling forest that began up there on the hill. They had both grown tired, for they came straight from the café where they had sat with the entire singing club until dawn; they lay down under a beech on the edge of a sloping meadow, and fell asleep. They awoke at noon, in the hot summer stillness, went further back into the woods, chattered and laughed the whole day without knowing why; and it was late in the evening before he brought her back to the city again for the performance. . . . There were many lovely things like this to remember; and the two lived very contentedly without thinking of the future. At the beginning of the winter Marie suddenly became ill. The doctor had strictly forbidden all visits; for the illness was an inflammation of the brain or something similar, and every excitement should be avoided. At first Karl went to the Ladenbauers' every day to enquire about her, but later, as the thing drew along, he cut his visits to every two or three days. Once Frau Ladenbauer said to him at the door: "To-day you may come in, Herr von Breiteneder, but please be careful not to give yourself away."— "How could I give myself away?" Karl asked. "What has happened?"— "Yes, I am afraid there is no more hope for her eyes."— "How is that?"— "She can hardly see any more. Alas! this is left over from her sickness. But she doesn't know yet that it is incurable. Pull yourself together, so that she won't notice anything." Then Karl stammered a few words and left. He was suddenly uneasy at the thought of seeing Marie again. It seemed to him as though he had liked nothing about her so much as her eyes: they had been

so bright, and she had always laughed with them. He would come to-morrow. But he didn't come, nor on the next day, nor the day following. And he always kept putting the visit farther ahead. He did not want to see her, he explained to himself, until she had become inured to her fate. Then it happened that he had to go on a business trip which his father had been pressing him to take for some time. He travelled considerably, was in Berlin, Dresden, Cologne, Leipzig, Prague. Once he sent old Frau Ladenbauer a card saying that he would turn up as soon as he got back, and to please give Marie his best wishes.— He came back in the spring, but he did not go to the Ladenbauers'. He could not bring himself to go. . . . Naturally he thought of her less from day to day, and made up his mind to forget her entirely. He hadn't been the first and only one. He heard nothing at all about her, became more and more at ease, and for some reason often imagined that Marie was living in the country with some relatives he had often heard her mention.

Then yesterday evening—he was going to visit acquaintances who lived in the neighbourhood—he happened to be passing the inn where the performances of the Ladenbauer Company used to be given. Absorbed in his own thoughts, he was about to go on when the yellow poster struck his eye: he knew where he was, and he felt a shock even before he had read a word. Then he saw the black and red letters in front of him: "Maria Ladenbauer, known as the 'white blackbird'—first appearance after her recovery," and he stood still as though paralyzed. At the same moment Rebay appeared at his side, as if he had grown out of the ground, his white dishevelled hair uncovered, the black shabby top-hat in his hand, and a fresh flower in his button-hole. He greeted Karl: "Herr Breiteneder—well, the idea! And surely you will honour us again this evening! Miss Marie will go wild with delight when she hears that her old-time friends are coming around to see her. Poor thing! We've stood a lot for her, Herr von Breiteneder; but now she has pulled through." He talked on for quite a while, and Karl did not move, although he wished he were far away from here. But suddenly he took hope, and he asked Rebay if Marie couldn't see anything at all, if she didn't at least get a glimmer of light. "A glimmer of light," the other man answered. "What are you thinking of, Herr von Breiteneder! She sees nothing,

absolutely nothing!" He exclaimed with a peculiar elation, "Everything coal black in front of her. . . . But you will soon convince yourself, Herr von Breiteneder, that everything has its good side, if one dare say that—and the girl has a voice, more beautiful than ever! . . . And she is good, good all the way through. Even more friendly than she used to be. Well, you know her, of course—ha ha!— Ah, to-day a great many are coming who know her . . . naturally not so well as you, Herr von Breiteneder; for naturally certain things are over with now. But that will come again! I knew one who was blind and had twins—ha ha!— Look who is there," he said suddenly, and Karl was standing with him in front of the ticket window where Frau Ladenbauer was sitting. She was bloated and pale, and looked at him without saying a word. She gave him a ticket; he paid, hardly knowing what was happening to him. But suddenly he blurted out, "Don't tell Marie, for God's sake, Frau Ladenbauer . . . don't tell Marie that I am here! . . . Herr Rebay, don't tell her anything about it!"

"All right, then," Frau Ladenbauer said, and turned her attention to the other people who were waiting for tickets.

"Not a word out of me," Rebay said. "But afterwards, that will be a surprise! Then you will join in? A big time—ho ho! But I must go now, Herr von Breiteneder." And he had disappeared. Karl walked through the crowded room; and in the garden immediately adjoining, he sat down far to the rear, at a table where an elderly couple had taken places in front of him. They said nothing, examined the new guest in silence, and nodded to each other mournfully. Karl sat there and waited. The performance began, and Karl heard the old familiar things again; except that it all seemed peculiarly changed to him, since he had never sat so far back from the stage. First the band-master Rebay played a so-called overture, only a few harsh isolated chords reaching Karl. Then as the curtain rose, Ilka, the Hungarian, appeared in a bright red dress and spurred boots; she sang Hungarian songs and danced czardas. After her was a humorous lecture by the comedian Wiegel-Wagel. He entered in siskin-green evening dress, announced that he had just returned from Africa, and reported all sorts of nonsensical adventures which had culminated in his marriage to an old widow. Then came a duet by Herr and Frau

Ladenbauer; both wore Tyrolean costumes. After them, in a dirty white clown's outfit, followed crazy little Jedek. First he showed his skill at juggling, while his gigantic eyes wandered among the audience, as though he were hunting for someone. Then he lined up some plates in front of him, and pounded a march on them with a wooden staff; he ordered glasses, and played a melancholy waltz tune with moist fingers, all the while looking at the floor and smiling soulfully. He walked off, and Rebay attacked the keys imposingly. A whisper passed through the room into the garden, people put their heads together—and suddenly Marie was standing on the stage. Her father who had led her up here had dropped down again immediately, and she stood alone. And Karl saw her standing there, with the sightless eyes in the sweet pale face; he saw her quite plainly, how at first she simply moved her lips and smiled a little. Without knowing it, he had leaped up from his chair, was leaning against the green lamp, and could have almost shrieked with misery and pity.— And now she began to sing. In an entirely strange voice, soft, much softer than before. It was a song that she had always sung; Karl had heard it at least fifty times. But the voice remained peculiar and strange to him. He could not recognize the quality of this voice until she came to the refrain, with its lines, "they call me the white blackbird, at home and where I work." She sang all three stanzas, with Rebay accompanying; and, as he always had done, he frequently looked up at her severely. When she had ended, applause broke out, loud and thunderous. Marie smiled and bowed. Her mother came up the three steps to the stage, Marie reached out her arms as though she were feeling for her mother's hands; but the applause was so great that she had to sing her second song immediately, and this one too Karl had heard for the fiftieth time or more. It began, "My love and I go to the country to-day . . ." and Marie tossed back her head with as much enjoyment, and swayed as lightly, as though she really were going out into the country with her love, and could see the blue sky and the green meadows, and could dance out in the open, the way it said in the song. And then she sang her third song, the new one.—

"Here's a little garden," Herr Rebay said, and Karl gave a start. The sunlight was now brilliant. The street gleamed in the distance, everything was bright and living. "We could sit down

there," Rebay went on, "to a glass of wine. I am thirsty already. It is going to be a hot day."

"Hot, did you say!" said someone behind them. Breiteneder turned around. . . . What, this chap had run after him too? What did he want with him? . . . It was crazy Jedek; he had never been called anything else, but it was evident that he would soon really go completely insane. A few days ago he had threatened to kill his pale lanky wife; and it was hard to explain why he was allowed to run at large. Now, in his dwarf-like smallness, he slunk along next to Karl. Two wide-open unexplainably cheerful eyes stared out of a yellowish face; on his head sat his notorious little soft grey hat with the worn-out feather; he was carrying in his hand a slender walking-stick. And now, suddenly ahead of the others, he had taken a seat on a wooden bench which leaned against the little low house; he beat his stick heavily against the green painted table, and called for the waiter. The two others followed him. The street wound on up past the green wooden lattice-work, past sorry little villas, and lost itself in the woods.

The waiter brought wine. Rebay laid his top-hat on the table, ran his fingers through his white hair, made his usual gesture of rubbing his smooth cheeks with his two hands, shoved Jedek's glass aside, and bent over the table towards Karl. . . . "I haven't gone out of my head yet, Herr Breiteneder! I know what I am doing! . . . Just why should I be to blame? . . . Do you know whom I used to write songs for when I was young? . . . For Matras! That's no small matter! And they attracted attention! Words and music by me! And many of them were taken over into other plays!"

"Let the glass stay there," Jedek said, and sniggered to himself.

"Come, Herr von Breiteneder," Rebay went on, and pushed the glass away again. "You know me, and you know that I am a respectable man! And there is never anything indecent in my songs, never anything smutty! . . . And the song that old Ladenbauer was prosecuted for that time was written by someone else! . . . And to-day I am sixty-eight, Herr von Breiteneder—and that's getting up in years. And do you know how long I have been with the Ladenbauer Company? . . . Eduard Ladenbauer was still living then, the man who started the company. And I have known Marie from the time she was born. I have been with

the Ladenbauers for twenty-nine years—next March is my thirtieth anniversary. . . . And I didn't steal my melodies—they are by me, all by me! And do you know how many of them altogether have been played on the hurdy-gurdy? Eighteen! Isn't that so, Jedek?"

Jedek continued laughing silently, with his eyes wide open. Now he had slid all three glasses over in front of him, and began stroking their edges lightly with his fingers. The sound was delicate, and somewhat plaintive, like the notes of far-off oboes and clarinets. Breiteneder had always greatly admired the trick, but just now he could not stand these sounds at all. People at the other tables began listening; some people nodded their satisfaction; a fat gentleman clapped his hands. Suddenly Jedek shoved all three glasses away again, crossed his arms, and stared out at the white street where more and more people kept wandering up towards the woods. Things were hazy before Karl's eyes; it seemed to him as though people were dancing and floating behind spider webs. He rubbed his forehead and his eyelids, he wanted to think clearly. . . . He couldn't help it! It was a frightful misfortune—but he was not to blame for it! And suddenly he stood up; for as he thought of how it ended, his breast was almost bursting. "Let's go," he said.

"Yes, fresh air is the main thing," Rebay answered.

Jedek had suddenly become nasty, for no evident reason. He stopped in front of a table where a harmless couple was sitting, brandished his walking-stick, and shouted in a loud voice. The two harmless people were embarrassed and tried to hush him up; the others laughed and thought he was drunk.

Breiteneder and Rebay were already out on the white street; and Jedek, who had become quiet again, came prancing after them. He took off his small grey hat, hung it on his walking-stick, and held the stick with the hat over his shoulder like a gun, while with the other hand he waved vigorous greetings up towards the sky.

"You don't need to think that I am going to make excuses," Rebay said, with his teeth chattering. "Oho, I don't have any reason to! None at all! I had the best intentions, and any one will grant me that. Didn't I myself help her rehearse the song? . . . Come; I did! Yes, when she was still sitting in the room

with her eyes in bandages, I rehearsed it with her. . . . And do you know how I got the idea? It is a misfortune, I thought to myself, but everything isn't lost. She still has her voice, and her beautiful face. . . . And I told her mother this too, when she was half out of her mind. 'Frau Ladenbauer,' I said, 'nothing is lost yet—please listen to me!' And then to-day with all these institutions for the blind, where after a time they can even learn to read and write. . . . And then I knew one—a young man who had been blind for twenty years. Every night he dreamed of the most beautiful fireworks, of all possible kinds of lights—"

Breiteneder broke out laughing. "Are you talking in earnest?" he asked him.

"Ach!" Rebay answered gruffly. "What do you want then? Do you want me to kill myself, is that what you want? . . . Why? My soul, I've had enough bad luck in this world!— Or do you think it isn't enough for one life, Herr von Breiteneder, if a person once wrote pieces for the theatre the way I did as a young man, and if at sixty-eight he has to accompany hoarse-voiced hams on a rickety old tin pan for a few dirty kreutzer, and write songs for them? . . . Do you know how much I get for a song? . . . You would be surprised, Herr von Breiteneder!"

"But they are played on the hurdy-gurdy," said Jedek, who was now walking along beside them seriously and correctly, even elegantly.

"What do you want of me?" Breiteneder said. It seemed to him suddenly as though the two were persecuting him, and he did not know why. What had he to do with these people? . . . But Rebay went on talking: "I wanted to start the girl on a career! . . . Do you understand, a new career! . . . And with this same new song! . . . With the same one! . . . And maybe it isn't pretty? . . . Maybe it isn't touching? . . ."

Little Jedek suddenly held Breiteneder back by the sleeve, raised the index finger of his left hand to command attention, set his lips, and whistled. He whistled the melody of the new song which Marie Ladenbauer, known as the "white blackbird," had sung last night. And he whistled it very well, for that was another of his tricks.

"The melody had nothing to do with it," Breiteneder said.

"How is that?" Rebay shouted.— They were all walking

swiftly, almost running, although the road was mounting considerably. "How is that, Herr von Breiteneder? . . . The text is to blame, you think? . . . Yes, for God's sake, is there anything in the text, then, that Marie herself didn't know about? . . . And in her room, when I was studying it with her, she didn't cry a single time. She said, 'That's a sad song, Herr Rebay, but it is beautiful! . . . It's beautiful,' she said. . . . Yes, of course it's a sad song, Herr von Breiteneder—and it's a sad lot, too, that's fallen to her. And you don't expect me to write her a cheerful song? . . ."

The street was lost in the forest. The sun gleamed through the branches; out from the bushes came the sounds of calling and laughter. They were all three walking abreast, as swiftly as though each were trying to get ahead of the others. Suddenly Rebay began again, "And the people—I'll be damned if they didn't applaud like mad. . . . I knew beforehand that she would make a big hit with that song!— And it made her happy too . . . she was fairly laughing all over, and the last stanza she had to repeat. And it's a touching stanza too! When it first occurred to me there were tears in my own eyes—you know, on account of the way it hinted back to the other song which she always sings. . . ." And he sang, or rather spoke, except that he brought out each rhyme like an organ note:

"How wonderful and beautiful the world once was to *me*,
When I could see the sun shine on every *field and tree*,
When on Sundays with my sweetheart I would walk across the
land,

And just because he loved me he would lead me by the *hand*;
But now no stars can shine for me again, nor any *sun*—
And happiness and love—for me such things are *done*."

"Stop!" Breiteneder shouted. "I heard it before, didn't I!"

"Maybe it isn't beautiful?" Rebay said, waving his top-hat. "There aren't many who can make songs like that these days. Five gulden old Ladenbauer gave me . . . that is my honorarium, Herr von Breiteneder. And besides, I helped her rehearse for it."

And Jedek raised his index finger again, and sang softly the refrain:

"O God, how bitter now is everything,
Since I shall never never see the spring."

"*Why* then, I ask you?" Rebay shouted. "Why? . . . I was in there with her right afterwards . . . isn't that so, Jedek? . . . And she was sitting there with a happy smile, and drinking her glass of wine, and I stroked her hair and said to her, 'Well, Marie, do you see how people liked it? Now people are sure to come out to us from the city too; the song will attract attention. . . . And you sing it magnificently . . . ' And so on, the sort of thing you say in situations like that. . . . And the proprietor came in, too, and congratulated her. And she received flowers—they weren't from you, Herr von Breiteneder. . . . And everything was in perfect order. . . . So why should my song be to blame? That is all nonsense!"

Suddenly Breiteneder stopped and grasped Rebay by the shoulders. "Why did you tell her I was there? . . . Just why? . . . Didn't I beg you not to tell her anything?"

"Let me go. I didn't say anything to her! She must have heard it from the old woman!"

"No," Jedek said obligingly, and bowed, "I took the liberty, Herr von Breiteneder—I took the liberty. Since I knew that you were there, I told her that you were there. And since she often asked after you when she was sick, I told her, 'Herr Breiteneder is there . . . he was standing in the rear next to the lamp,' I told her, 'and has been having a splendid time!'"

"So?" Breiteneder said. He felt a lump rise in his throat, and he had to turn his eyes away from the hard stare that Jedek had fixed on him. Tired out, he dropped down on a bench which they happened to be passing, and closed his eyes. Suddenly he saw himself sitting in the garden again, and old Frau Ladenbauer's voice was ringing in his ear: "Marie sends you her best. Wouldn't you care to come along with us after the performance?" He remembered how he had suddenly felt at this, as serenely at ease as though Marie had pardoned him everything. He finished his wine and had a better brand brought to him. He drank so much that everything in life seemed much simpler to him. He immediately began paying attention to the remainder of the programme contentedly, he clapped like the others, and when the performance was over

he went in the best of humour through the garden and the hall into the private room, to the round corner-table where the company usually gathered after the performance. Some were already there: Wiegel-Wagel, Jedek and his wife, somebody or other with glasses whom Karl did not know at all—everyone greeted him, and no one was especially astonished at seeing him again. Suddenly he heard Marie's voice behind him: "I am getting along all right, mother, I know the way." He did not dare turn around; but there she was, already sitting beside him and saying, "Good evening, Herr Breiteneder—and how are you?" And at this moment he remembered that in his time she had always used "Herr" in addressing some young man who had once been her lover. And then she ate her supper; everything had been placed before her already cut, and the whole party was as cheerful and satisfied as though there had been no change whatsoever. "It went well," old Ladenbauer said. "Now better times are coming again." Frau Jedek told how everyone had found Marie's voice much more beautiful than before, and Herr Wiegel-Wagel raised his glass and exclaimed, "To the health of the convalescent!" Marie held up her glass, all the others clinked their glasses with hers, Karl too touched it with his own. Then he felt as though her dead eyes would sink into his own, and as though she could look deep down within him. Also, her brother was there, very fashionably dressed, and he offered Karl a cigar. But Ilka was the most hilarious of all; her admirer, a fat young man with a strained expression in his eyes, sat opposite her and conversed animatedly with Herr Ladenbauer. But Frau Jedek had not taken off her yellow rain-coat, and was always peering into a corner where there was nothing to see. Two or three times people came over from a neighbouring table and congratulated Marie. She answered in her usual quiet manner, as though nothing had been altered in the least. And suddenly she said to Karl, "But why so silent?" Now for the first time he noticed that he had been sitting there the whole time without opening his mouth. He now became more vivacious than the others, joining in the conversation; except that he spoke no word to Marie. Rebay told of the good old days when he had written songs for Matras, recited a farce that he had written thirty-five years ago, and even acted out the rôles himself to some extent. Especially as a Bohemian musician he aroused much laughter. About one the party broke up. Frau Ladenbauer took her daughter's arm. Every-

one was laughing, shouting . . . it was quite strange, nobody found anything exceptional in the fact that the world around Marie was all in blackness. Karl walked beside her. Her mother asked him harmlessly about this or that: how things were getting along at home, whether he had had a good time on his trip—and Karl talked hurriedly of various things he had seen, especially the theatres and music halls that he had been to, and he kept wondering at how securely Marie kept to her path, led by her mother, and how contented and cheerful she seemed. Then they were all sitting in the café, a smoky old place which was already empty by this time. And the fat friend of the Hungarian Ilka treated the company. And now, in the midst of all the noise and commotion, Marie had shifted quite near to Karl, just as in earlier times, so that he could notice the warmth of her body. And suddenly he felt her hand touch and stroke his own, although she did not speak. Now he would gladly have said something to her . . . something sweet and reassuring—but he could not. . . . He gave her a side-long glance, and it seemed to him as though something were watching him out of her eyes; yet it was not the look of a human being, but something uncanny, strange, which he had never known before—he shuddered as though a ghost were sitting next to him. . . . Her hand trembled and was gently withdrawn, and she said softly, "Why are you uneasy? I am just the same as I always was." Again he was unable to answer, and he talked to the others. A little while later a voice suddenly exclaimed, "Where is Marie?" It was Frau Ladenbauer. Now it occurred to them all that Marie had disappeared. "Where is Marie?" others exclaimed. Some arose, old Ladenbauer stood at the door of the café and called out into the street, "Marie!" They were all excited, they began talking to one another. Someone said, "But how could a person let any one like that get up and leave by herself?" Suddenly a shout came up from the court, "Bring some candles! . . . Bring a light!" And a woman shrieked, "Jesus Mary!" That was old Frau Ladenbauer's voice again. They all rushed through the little kitchen of the café into the court. Dawn was already creeping over the roofs. The court of the old one-storied house was encircled by a wooden passage-way; up above, a man in his shirt-sleeves leaned against the railing and looked down, holding a candlestick with a lighted candle in his hand. Two women in night-gowns appeared behind him. Another man was running down the creaking steps.

That is what Karl saw first. Then he saw something gleaming faintly in front of him; someone held up a white lace shawl and let it fall again. He heard words near him: "Nothing can be done now . . . she doesn't move. . . . Get a doctor! . . . What is the matter with the ambulance. . . . A policeman! A policeman! . . ." People were all talking together, some hurried out to the street, mechanically Karl followed the one figure with his eyes: it was the lanky Frau Jedek in her yellow coat; she held both hands against her forehead in despair, hurried away and did not return. . . . People were pressing behind Karl. He had to push back with his elbows in order not to fall over Frau Ladenbauer, who was kneeling on the ground, holding Marie's two hands in hers, rocking them back and forth and crying, "Say something . . . say something! . . ." At last someone was coming with a lantern, the janitor, in a brown dressing-gown and old slippers; he threw the light into the face of the prostrate woman. Then he said, "But such a pity! And she must have fallen with her head right there against the wall." And now Karl saw that Marie lay stretched out alongside the coping of the well. Suddenly the man in his shirt-sleeves on the passage-way spoke up: "I heard a noise of some kind; it hasn't been five minutes!" And everyone looked up at him, but he only went on repeating, "It hasn't been five minutes since I heard the noise . . ."— "How did she get out there?" someone whispered behind Karl. "But I tell you," another person answered, "she was familiar with the house. She felt her way through the kitchen, then up the wooden stairs, and then down over the railing—it is too bad!" So the whispering went on around Karl, but he did not know any of the voices, although the people who were talking were certainly acquaintances of his. But he did not turn around. Somewhere in the neighbourhood a cock crowed. Karl felt as though he were dreaming. The janitor placed the lantern on the edge of the well. The mother cried, "Isn't there a doctor coming soon?" Old Ladenbauer held up Marie's head so that the light of the lantern fell full on her face. Now Karl saw plainly how the nostrils dilated, the lips quivered, and the dead open eyes looked out the same as before. He saw too that it was red and wet in the spot from which Marie's head had been lifted. He called, "Marie! Marie!" But no one heard him, and he did not hear himself. The man up above on the passage-way was still standing there, leaning over the railing, with

the two women beside him, as though they were watching a play. The candle was out. An early violet twilight lay over the court. Frau Ladenbauer had folded the white lace shawl and laid Marie's head against it; Karl stood motionless, staring into space. Of a sudden it was light enough. He saw now that everything about Marie's face was completely quiet and nothing was moving but the drops of blood which ran down on the moist pavement from her forehead, from her hair, across her cheeks and neck. And he knew now that Marie was dead. . . .

Karl opened his eyes as if to drive away a bad dream. He sat alone on the bench by the road-side, and he saw band-master Rebay and crazy Jedek hurrying down the same street as they had all come up together. The two seemed to be talking heatedly together, gesticulating violently. Jedek's walking-stick stood out like a fine line against the horizon. They went faster and faster, accompanied by a light cloud of dust, but their words were lost in the wind. On all sides the landscape sparkled; and far below, in the heat of noon, lay the hazy, quivering city.

CHANSON EQUIVOQUE

BY SCOFIELD THAYER

Say not the ways of love are young
And that the earth is very free
For all the songs we sang are sung
And ancient is the changing sea,

For all the hearts we thought were broken
Have taken on new leaves again
And this their youth is a sure token
That love is but a slip of pain,

That love is but a way of ending
What better had not e'er begun
And that for such there is no mending
Beneath the shadow of the sun.

THE HUDSON MEMORIAL

BY ROGER FRY

FROM a sociological point of view the controversy over the Hudson Memorial is full of interest. It shows us what we had almost come to forget—that the Philistines are always with us. (My thanks to A. B. W. for his timely revival of the word.) The Philistine has been quiet for many years, and questions of art have come rather to be quarrels between different groups of artists, or at least of people owing some allegiance to art, and now suddenly the Philistines have woken up and found a voice. It would be extremely interesting to find, if one could, the causes which have thus stimulated to renewed self-confidence and vocal expression that vast mass of people who generally acquiesce silently in what is done for them. Is it Mr Sickert joining the Academy? Is it the presence of an amateur painter in the Government? Is it one sign of a general wave of obscurantism and reaction of which one feels the effect in many quarters? I cannot say; I would consult those who are weather-wise in the spiritual atmosphere did I know such.

But there is the fact—the Philistines are upon us, and we have to close up our ranks. I have not spared my criticisms of Mr Epstein's sculpture in the past. He aims at something which has for me only a minor interest, but he attains his ends with a mastery to which I have always paid tribute. What he feels he expresses with a virile directness and energy which are admirable qualities. So against a common enemy he must accept me as an ally, as once before over the nude statues on a Strand building. We can settle our quarrels elsewhere and at another time; for the moment all who care for art of whatever shade must face the common foe and stop once for all his arrogant attempt to lay down the law out of the abundance of his ignorance and insensibility. I say once for all, but I recognize alas that this is pure rhetoric, for his voice will never be completely silent; only, from time to time, the Philistine can be made to see that as he has always made a fool of himself in the past, the probabilities are that he always will.



THE HUDSON MEMORIAL. BY JACOB EPSTEIN

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And what of the sculpture itself? I am not going to pretend that it has converted me into an enthusiastic admirer of Mr Epstein's sculpture, or that it causes me any profound emotional reaction, but it has certain qualities which are almost always absent from our public sculpture. As a decorative arrangement of forms within a rectangle it shows a real inventive ingenuity and sense of proportion. The quantities of relief and hollow, the relative proportions of light and shade are admirably balanced, and the linear rhythm of the design is well carried through. By an extremely ingenious placing of the forms of the birds so as to fit almost exactly (but not too mechanically) around the form of the nude figure of Rima, Mr Epstein has been able to give to the restricted surface a richness of light and shade, a density and weight which enable it to tell at a distance even in the full sunlight of a summer's day. This just estimate of scale and of the intensity of relief necessary for a given situation, particularly out of doors, is hardly ever attained in our public monuments, and merely to have achieved this should entitle Mr Epstein to high praise. Whether you like this or not it is a legible design, whereas our sculptors nearly always mumble and blur their statements from timidity and want of conviction.

Besides this patent decorative quality we can recognize a definite imaginative purpose, a clear personal attitude in the conception of the figure of Rima. She is imagined as a human being with something of the haggard shyness and strangeness of wild things. This is certainly no tired repetition of a conventional formula, but a vivid and individual creation. To me the effort to convey by such emphatic illustration a poetic idea is unsympathetic, but no one can deny that the sculptor has achieved his intention. It is thus a work primarily governed by a poetical idea and expressed in vigorously decorative forms. What I regret is that among those, to me, minor concerns the distinctively plastic imagination has not found any place.

There is a poetic idea and a decorative idea, and these are thoroughly fused; there is not, so far as I can see, a plastic idea.

The general design of the sanctuary seems to me successful. The long rectangle of stone which brackets the sculpture and the two plain rectangles on either side is well proportioned to the space of lawn in front of the long stone-bordered pools. But this commendable elevation has not received any adequate plastic execu-

tion. The stone rectangles are too thinly and smoothly finished, the edges are too mechanical and abstract. What was needed was either some surface treatment, some blunting of edges, or even some play of light and shade which would have given a density and volume to the stonework sufficient to carry the richness and weight of the sculptured slab. The usual mistake of our men of taste is here shown, the mistake, namely, of thinking that simplicity can be achieved by mere abstraction and negativity. True aesthetic simplicity can only be achieved by a rich and fervid sensibility working through the complexity of the matter to an ultimate unity. Such dead and mechanical simplicity as is shown here is less offensive, but no more moving to the sensual imagination than mechanical enrichment. I wish Mr Epstein himself had cut these plain rectangles straight from the rough stone. Then they might fittingly have enshrined his relief, for the whole would have had a truly related surface quality. This would well have repaid the extra labour and cost.

So much for the sculpture itself. A word more about its vociferous critics. What fascinates me about the Philistine is his extraordinary sensitiveness, the ease with which the slightest surprise puts him off his balance and out of temper. One may almost say that whenever a work of art has sufficient accent for him to become aware of it, he sees red. It is not so much certain kinds of art that he hates. He hates any art of which he becomes aware. He is only contented and peaceful when, as he jogs his way, he can pass public monuments and statues without having any sensation at all. He has a blind traditional feeling that monuments have got to be there, they are part of the age-long prescription of public ritual, but, since they must be there, let them be as nearly as possible invisible, let them in no way rouse him from the day-dreams of his instinctive life. Then, and then only, is he content. But the expression of any idea of which he becomes aware rouses him to a passionate fury of denunciation. The Royal Academy has evolved in response to this feeling on the part of the average man. It attends to this inexplicable but apparently inevitable convention of art, but it keeps it well out of the way of any real interest, it produces something entirely anodyne and innocuous. And so the Philistine is a pampered being. Would that he could reflect for a moment, if such an effort of sympathetic imagination were possible to him, on the hard fate of those of us who have had

the misfortune to be born with certain susceptibilities which, in our madness, we have cultivated by years of study to a considerable acuity, and imagine what heroic self-control is ours, as we walk about the streets of London, as we pass the statues in Parliament Square, or gaze on the ruined surface of Westminster Abbey, or dodge a taxi behind the Edith Cavell monstrosity, or contemplate the outside of the Victoria and Albert Museum, or see any one of the hundred thousand horrors to which the streets of London expose us.

We do not stamp with rage, we do not cry and shriek, we do not accuse the authors of these things of Fascism or unnatural vice, we behave with exemplary calm and patience, and yet we suffer far more in our sensations of discord and disharmony than it is possible for those who have never trained their senses in such matters. But watch the Philistine in his intemperate rage. There has just closed a show of some of the finest modern French pictures which have ever been seen in London at the Independent Gallery. It was a selection of picked masterpieces by the men whose work is acclaimed all over the civilized world, and yet there were to be seen there respectable old gentlemen stamping like naughty children on their catalogues, invading the private offices of the gallery to insult the proprietor, and carrying on like an hysterical woman in the lift. Really, before asking the artists to mend their morals, we have some right to ask our censors to look a little more to their manners.

Decidedly the modern Philistine is a pampered being. There have been times when his feelings were rudely disregarded by tyrannous gentlemen of taste and education. But in the fullness of time he has come by his own. We now bow to his power, we admit that being in so huge a majority he has a right to have nearly everything arranged to his taste—look at the lounge of any big hotel and see how carefully his whims are consulted. We admit that ninety-nine out of every hundred public buildings and memorials should be of the requisite ineptitude. But has the Philistine no compassion? He has in London hundreds, perhaps thousands, of pieces of sculpture totally devoid of all significance; cannot he allow us one little corner of Hyde Park, past which his daily business does not take him, where we can, in leisure moments, contemplate something which is, to put it at the least, decorous, intelligible, and respectful of past tradition?

THE SUMMER SEA

BY GEORGE H. DILLON

Not yet the earth has answered me
And I have come upon the sea :
A wall of water, and a shore.

Here halted other feet before.
In pools of shadow on the sand
Their empty indentations stand.

Now I shall ask of sea and sky.

I asked of them who with earth lie
But they have given no reply.
They have no word, no source of sound
Save their soft merging with the ground.

O unimprinted blazing sea,
Earth has no answer. Answer me.

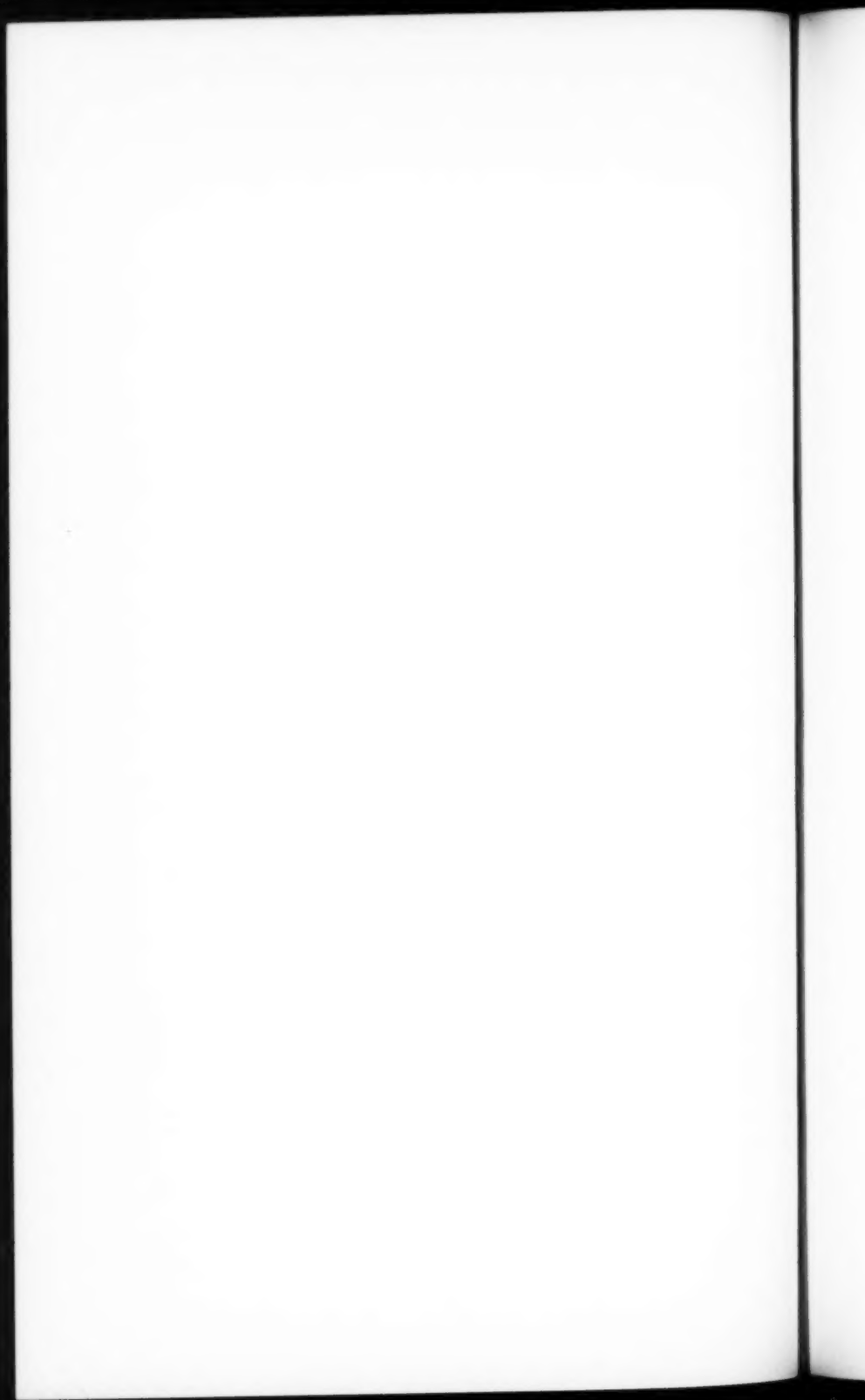


PORTRAIT. BY CLEMENT WILENCHICK





A YOUNG ACTOR. BY CLEMENT WILENCHICK





DRAWING. BY CLEMENT WILENCHICK

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A VIEW OF MODERN MUSIC

BY PAUL ROSENFELD

THERE is a blood in all music since Wagner that descends from him. A good measure of the principles of expression of the period now closing about us was developed from his. He might not allow the derivation, so individually has life evolved the inherited elements, so wildly intensified them. His new forcefulness of utterance, kin to the literary naturalists'; his new refinement, which had analogies in the poetry of the symbolist and other exquisite movements of the time, have become two giants, Primitive and Exquisite, the one stamping, roaring, dancing with all the relentless fury and blind insistence of machinery; the other whispering the flowerlike tenderness, the almost unbearable sensitivity, of the East. His new sonorities, new combinations of notes, new instruments, restless chromaticism, once so daring and harsh and penetrating, now appear to lie within the very first of a series of concentric circles, beyond which the ever increasing atonality, shrillness, stridency, and closeness of harmony of the contemporary music spreads ever greater rings. The scattering of sharp penetrating sounds among the soft euphonious ones, by which he corrected the over-smoothness of the romanticists, has become the feeling for fine acidity of sound threatening the place of the violin and the remaining strings. He had a rare art of the orchestra, a science of filling in the inner voices and creating unwonted richnesses, of writing figures that were not so much a music imposed upon instruments as one evoked from them and declarative of their quality. But the new men produce prismatic opulencies and delicacies of orchestral effect, crying densities of sound that make the *Götterdämmerung* orchestra begin to wear thin. They have grown so expert in the chemistry of instruments that their writing moves ever nearer a pure interplay of instrumental sonorities. The comparatively gradual and extended climaxes of the *Lohengrin* and *Tristan* preludes have become the more elusive, vaguer culminations of the Debussy poems. The relatively simple humour and irony of the *Meistersinger* score has

become the multiform thematic and instrumental sarcasm, comedy, slapstick of Strauss and the group around Strawinsky. In place of the noble tides that swept through *Tristan und Isolde*, we have the *Sacre* with its piston-like dance of human bacteria. None the less, the relations between these swiftly moving contemporary expressions and Wagner's relatively slower ones is undeniable: the two so incessantly help interpret one another. Poet and philosopher in a living sense as well as musician, Wagner was a focal point of his age, clarifying its feelings and crystallizing its impulses; and the expression of a time begets offspring. It impels succeeding times to assert themselves and readjust the balance.

Yet the principles evolved from Wagner are only partially characteristic of modern music. A feeling radically opposed to the old German's informs the latest period. The split is wider than those normally occurring from the reactions of succeeding generations to preceding ones. It opposes to the spirit of a civilization one in all its beauty fundamentally foreign to it. Rebel that he was and man of the theatre, Wagner was filled with the particular genius which has elemented Western music since its rise in the early renaissance. This is a positive relationship to life, equally positive in form and feeling. In the shape of sound-relations, and within the material limits of his age, Wagner expressed the characteristic Western "active avidity of life," the fullness of desire and intensity of will, and their inseparable companions, faith, "scepticism free of pessimism and mysticism devoid of resignation," with which the diatonically-spirited music of Josquin as well as of Bach, of Palestrina and Haydn and Beethoven alike, is suffused. Tragedy was as well known to him as to the older men, and gave meaning to the great portion of his work, too; but as in them, fear was lost in love, and doubt completed in faith. Undeniably, a germ of passive feeling and world-weariness unfolds luxuriously in *Parsifal*. But even this work of his decline mounts to a positive conclusion. In all its weariness it affirms; and the body of Wagner stands a very monument to passionate abundance. In all its theatricalism, the mass of his music is self-determined, the deepest intention of the gesture and the word. It is this relationship to life which has found no root among his immediate followers. Possibly there was a disintegration in the West itself in which the old direction was lost. The conflict and the degeneration are manifest in Richard Strauss.

Strauss was determined the successor to Wagner. He had a native abundance, not very select indeed, but young and vibrant. The Western approach was in his blood, the beginning of a positive feeling. He had a broad attack, an ambitious grasp; he showed the relentless curiosity and daring of the born experimenter; and his germinal ideas, witness the opening pages of *Heldenleben*, of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and of *Salomé*, are good grand manner. But the creative power itself was recalcitrant. Strauss never developed his melodic vein to any degree of purity. He began as a common if breezily abundant musician; it is doubtful whether there are a dozen measures of good music in the whole of *Tod und Verklärung*; and although his style has grown somewhat more refined with the years, his ideas have never attained first water. It is probable that much of the vogue of his tone-poems flows from the fact that he gives people who enjoy commonplace musical ideas an opportunity of breathing peacefully in the severe concert hall. Strauss has never produced a positive form. *Heldenleben*, his classic attempt to continue the heroic tradition, demonstrates the incapacity. Like the rest of his tone-poems, it leans heavily upon literature. It is true that most romantic music has descriptive elements, but Strauss's programme music differs from Wagner's and Berlioz's and Liszt's in this: that while theirs has a self-sufficiency, much of his has no value apart from the significance arbitrarily assigned to it. Forget the intended portraiture of the solo violin in *Heldenleben*, forget that the great development section represents a battle, forget that the baby is being bathed in the opening section of the *Symphonia Domestica*, and you have some quite empty music. You have it, in any case. It is chiefly as an orchestral virtuosity that Strauss's creative force became positive. His characterizations and creations of mood have increased the expressivity of instrumental music. The inherent comedy of certain of his ideas, particularly those in *Til Eulenspiegel*, constitutes him discoverer of a great field of contemporary exploration. Strauss has gotten great magnificence of effect with polyphonic writing. The middle section of the *Symphonia Domestica* is a golden tapestry of sound of a density scarcely ever previously achieved in music. Yet not even Strauss's orchestral virtuosity is impeccable. The sonority of his tone-poems is not invariably distinguished. It is often coarse and blurred, far below the fine standard of either Wagner, Debussy, or Stravinsky. A much clearer, crisper sonority

is to be gotten from the symphonies of Strauss's contemporary, Gustav Mahler, like himself a pretender to the kingly crown. Mahler's structures are sparer and more athletic than Strauss's. All the instruments of his orchestra sound. His effects are much more precise and his tone is pleasantly sharp. The harps for example which go lost in Strauss's orchestration are treated by Mahler with a frank satisfying stroke. Unfortunately Mahler was even less free a force than Strauss, and his work still more emphatically than the latter's evidences the collapse of a great tradition.

It was a little as though Western life had secretly beckoned to the alien feeling that was now to become its own, and given it the confidence to assert itself. In the middle of the century, impelled by the oriental elements in Liszt, and guided by the Slavic folk song and the barbaric colour of the East, a national school of musicians cropped up in Russia and conducted its experiments in defiance of the elegant westernizing school led by Rubenstein and Tschaikowsky. Coincident with Wagner's decline the movement found its universal expression in the stark, primitive, passively inflected music of Moussorgsky. It was the spirit of the immense helpless Orient, wise in patient submissions which spoke with the apparatus of Western music through this rare genius. Possibly that was the response of life to Western mechanization. The passive attitude is present in the very form of his characteristic grim themes, in the sudden apathetic falls of the melodic line. The motive developed from the famous Volga boat-song, with which Boris Goudonov begins, is a classic example. It plots the line of a profound impulse which lifts itself towards passionate, painful assertion, but, impotent to sustain itself, sinks nervelessly downward as if in submission to a fate against which it revolted without great hope. The Western men had consented in their destinies and embraced their fates; but this music comes from the depths of a life iron with material power, nevertheless aware before all action that its revolt will be futile and that it has no will to free itself. With Moussorgsky we stand in the snow and twilight among the helpless, the ignorant, and the brutal, with the "rude, lame, unmade" masses condemned by life to immedicable suffering; and over us there seem to tread symbols of conquering force wrong as well as right making cruel proud gestures we cannot comprehend. The release Moussorgsky brings is

the release of the submission to the inevitable and boundless pity for man's helpless lot. A seraphic purity of feeling had thrown the bridge. Moussorgsky had the utter simplicity and clarity of impulse of both the small child and the great sage. He intuitively adjusted musical means to his inner necessity. Self-taught he found his way with absolute certainty through musical forms. Since there was an immediate relationship between his way of feeling and the modes preserved in the liturgical chants of the Greek church, the old flat pentatonic scale got a parity in his work with the seven-tone European one, and brought with it a Russian oriental gorgeousness of harmony and melody. Neither pompousness nor grandiloquence had any part in him; he sat composing his easy, homely, sometimes humorous pieces as one might write a letter; and on first acquaintance they appear slight as folk-lyrics. His forms are so curiously kin to the Russian folk-song and the chants of the church that specimens of both fitted with a minimum of adjustment, and without injuring the style, into his music dramas. His rhythms have a nervousness, an irregularity, and a monotonousness new to European music. He developed a stark primitive expression, a cry of hoarse rough throats not alone in his folk-dramas. It is in his piano songs with their resonance of bronze. Scarce anything in European music since Bach has a tenderness more ethereal than his child-lyrics. And if Moussorgsky gave the universal expression to the movement, other members of his group, Borodin and Balakirew, genially helped him bring the feeling born of Kremlin mosques and minarets, dreary snowfields and limitless steppes, into music. The most practical member was Rimsky-Korsakoff. A brilliant nature though not an ardent one, a keenly musicianly intelligence despite an incapacity for thematic development, Rimsky had a living eye for the exotic and unusual line, for the curious and piquant shape and rhythm; and in his orchestration gave a genuine if somewhat sugary equivalent for the inventions of his deeper companions.

To the men on critical watch-towers, Europe might have appeared becoming once again a Western promontory of the mother continent. The music of the Russian Five was merely the first sign of reunion. A second was given a generation later in time; significantly on what had long been declared by its prophets the classic ground of Europe, successor to Greece and Roman Italy, and nurse of all modern culture. The essentially Western attitude

had become as impossible in France as it had in Germany. Roughly contemporary with Wagner, César Franck, a Belgian resident in Paris, had created a symphonic art which, a strong tincture of Jesuitical unction notwithstanding, unites something of the affirmative spirit of the great musical tradition with Latin precision. But the French symphonic school initiated by this broad music parallels on a selecter plane the work of Mahler and of Strauss. Its present leader, d'Indy, leans more heavily on Wagner and on Schumann than Franck did in his least inspired hours. His goldsmith workmanship and the edge and scintillance of his orchestra are compromised by a vein of banality and occasional cheapness which spots even the most solid and intricate of his works, the B-flat symphony and the piano sonata in B-minor; and the austerity of spirit and dignity of presentation of his permanent pages wears on others the aspect of an over-determination. When music was actually freshly coined in France as it was by Debussy at the close of the century, it reappeared as an art of gemlike edge inscribed not with the characters of the aggressive active West, but with distinctly feminine oriental ones. The music of Debussy is a changeling *peri* rocked in the snug French cradle. Qualities of the magic silken creature attest her indebtedness to the very old French culture; she has benefited by an aristocratic education. Indeed, few artists have brought more finely into play the harmonious combination of faculties bred by the temperate climate and fertile soil of France, and prized and cultivated by her intellectual directors, than Claude Debussy. Across the span of century this musician touches hands not only with Rameau, but with Claude Le Jeune as well. His Parisian *peri* has the style, born of the centuries of integrated life in France, which Wagner's Saxon valkyrie ignored. She maintains a sensible moderation, an exquisite reserve in her most intense and poignant moments, and she is as infrequently boring as she is pompous and grandiose. In all her sensuousness she remains elegant and precise. Yet the beat of her veins, her way of feeling, are entirely unrelated to the genius which posed the solid, majestically extended masonries of Versailles. It was an emotional Pyrrhonism which conditioned Debussy's fluid form, a complete, partly joyous scepticism of the possibility of either knowledge or truth of being and phenomena, a half-poignant sense of the utter uncertainty of the testimony of the senses and of consciousness. Those senses, that consciousness,

were alert, fastidious, and sharp to a hitherto unknown degree, and brought Debussy visual and auditory sensations of a new delicacy, a new tenderness, a new intense voluptuousness; made him hear elusive harmonies and subtle timbres drowsy with passion and reverie. But this world of singing flesh was dark as an inconstant dream. It was the sudden incomprehensible unclosure of magic flowers which wilted as suddenly again at the breath of an invisible fire; a region rich in tragic possibilities, but permanently suspending all judgement. One might inhabit these golden moods as long as one recognized them as nomad palaces, like to vanish into air. Indeed the recognition of their unsubstantiality intensified their loveliness with deep pathos. Hence the movement of sounds which came to him resembled the fantastic unpredictable play of light and spray, the sibilation of rustling grasses and leaves. The melodies were completely removed from the old set figures, merely the elusive asymmetrical line of incessantly modulating harmonies. The orchestral timbres and combinations were all iridescence and flicks of delicate luminous colour. To express this half delicious, half painful sense of ceaseless ineluctable flow, he found his way to *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, to *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and to the restless pageants of the sky and sea. The inconstancy of aim and purpose in all this sweet desire, the passivity and languorousness of the passion itself, authors of this changeful magic-lantern show of objects, lights, and sounds, made Moussorgsky a revelation to him, made him take the Russian's idiom, his pentatonic scale, his little *moujik*, and adopt them to the precise and fastidious spirit of France. And like the Russians, Debussy found his way to the music of the Iberian peninsula; there to further feed with the somnolent arabesque elements of the Spanish folk-song his own profoundly Eastern soul.

That spirit has possessed with intensity the quarter century which has elapsed since a bewildered and enchanted world heard the *Proses Lyriques*, the *Nocturnes*, the *Pelléas*. Debussy stands actually the centre and point of extreme incandescence of a musical epoch, quite as Moussorgsky stands its initiation, and the music produced since the war its evident conclusion. It is a period certain to remain one of the rewarding passages of Western music, rich in works of art, vibrant with experiment and daring, liberal in its conception of its material, full of new voices and blood poured from many sources hitherto sealed; but essentially feminine,

passive, and oriental in temper. A stream of reaction has been gathering power during the last fifteen years; Schoenberg, Stravinsky, and Bloch have diverged from Debussy much as Debussy diverged from Wagner, and possibly in a direction closer to the classical Westerner's than to that of the French composer. Again, well before the war, there seems to have been an integration or an attempt at integration of the spirit which brought Europe high. But as yet the reaction appears to constitute more of an exciting progress toward a new positiveness of form and feeling than a veritable conquest of it, although new developments may correct that view. The spirit of opposition appeared somewhat timidly among French musicians themselves. Ravel, early identified with Debussy, began composing in a style which, while retaining his preciosity and exquisiteness, has more rigidity of character than Debussy's, and seemed moving toward a reintegration of the excessively fluid style with the classical tradition. Yet it was, it is odd, in holy Russia, wedge of so much Asiatic spirit, that the reaction gathered its greatest force. Toward 1910 both the Russian schools, the elegant westernizing school of Rubenstein and Tschai-kowsky, and the nationalistic school of Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff, received new births, the one in Scriabine, the other in Stravinsky. The first man died too young, and in the first stages of a great career. He might have been the ultra-modern man. Beginning as a coolly aristocratic pianoforte composer of Chopinesque imprint, possibly smaller in scope than his great example, but freer and more economical of form, Scriabine evolved an intensely concentrated tragic style of his own. If his orchestral poems are somewhat overblown, too precious and too exalted, his later piano sonatas, poems, and preludes are delicate without jewellery, powerful without exaltation, and combine a strange elusiveness of movement with great emotional depth. The will to make a merely beautiful thing had long since been lost; the ninth sonata is tragic and agonizing in the antique, active sense. It struggles; it resolves. Even though these works constitute but the first few strides through a great field into which Scriabine was come, they have a permanency and have begun to exert an important influence: Szymanowsky and Miaskowsky have attempted music in Scriabine's freshly elegant spirit; and the Frenchman, Rudhyar, has commenced building out beyond them somewhat as

Scriabine himself built out from Chopin. It was to Strawinsky there fell the brilliant revolutionary *rôle*, the dramatic leadership in the new movement of European feeling as expressed through music. Strawinsky is only one of several revolutionaries and perhaps ultimately not even the weightiest of them. But he is the combination of artist and fighter, or propagandist which focuses interest. Both his revolt and his present deviation possess spectacularity. His own work has a quality of intense stylistic timeliness, and the struggle, the direction, the partial achievement and present entanglement in French formalism of the general reaction are evident in it as in that of none of his companions.

The musical origins of the young Strawinsky are in Debussy as well as in Rimsky and Moussorgsky. Russian music which had so vitally influenced the French was now in turn fecundated by them; and while all Strawinsky's music is folky in the spirit of his nationalistic antecedents, the opening of the *Le Rossignol* derives very directly from Nuages, the opening of *Petrouchka* recalls the *Image* for piano entitled *Movement*. The development of an original biting acrobatic genius has terminated this dependency. Even the stronger oriental flavour of the Strawinsky before the war and during it, has gradually been modified, and replaced by a sterner language. None the less an element of Strawinsky's basic feeling closely related to Debussy's and Moussorgsky's has not changed. The mechanistic view of life, the vision of a universe almost emptied of human energy and moving with relentless precision, so determinative in his choice of clock-work, machine-like rhythm, and in his characteristic unfailing interest in the swarming of insects and the mystical participation of the individual in his herd, has an origin in the prodigies of the age of steel, in the deterministic theories of late nineteenth-century science, and in modern civilization's mechanical application of the preferred individual function. But was it not a profound fatalism, a passive and will-less attitude that made Strawinsky so peculiarly receptive to these suggestions? A less acquiescent attitude, a smaller gift of fear, we are assured, would not have presented so favourable a ground to them. Yet with this mechanistic conception of life and these depressive feelings there have existed from the very first in Strawinsky certain of a very different complexion, colouring his expression with a vigorous character: a feeling of elemental power,

robustness, and hardihood, free diabolic harlequin-like movement, a gaiety and coolness, a thrust of earth. A free Whitmanish spirit inhabits his work, moving unconstrainedly among the materials of life, using creatively vulgar motifs, the rhythms of machinery, the sounds and cries of fairs and peasant puppet-theatres, cheap waltzes, ragtime, and the dance of the American cold potato, which is jazz. Something approximating a manifesto of independence from his immediate forbears exists, quite undeliberately, of course, in a setting of the old Volga boat-song once used as a sorrowful standard by Moussorgsky. The rude, nasal setting for woodwind and percussion takes from the tune all softness, hopelessness, and submission. It produces the expression of strength, determination, and endurance inherent in the line, and symbolizes the toughness and humour of the rough millions who have fought for life beside the mighty stream. In the quality of that brief piece lies the whole of Strawinsky's protest and the symbol of his reform. He has invariably replaced Debussy's preciousness, shimmer, and silk with a crisp, machine-like angular edge, with a sonority in which not the vibrance of violins, but the shrilling of the woodwind, the sounds of struck pianos, of percussion dominate. And in both of these feelings the more oriental and the more westerly, he belongs to his day; through them, bringing to this day an immediate release, and happy infectious awareness.

The history of the artist in Strawinsky and to a certain extent of the artist and the other modern composers is the history of a combination of these two conflicting emotional attitudes. They have not often lain down together, the lamb and the lion. Had they, Strawinsky might have been as astoundingly successful in producing extended form as he has been in producing original themes, inventions, and colourations. He is a brilliant, a daring and suggestive musician rather than a solid one. The resemblance to Schumann is startling. The immense penetration of material which is form, is identical with the unification of the artist; and Strawinsky's compositions are usually mosaic-like: juxtapositions of small pieces savourous and ferociously humorous in quality; successions of arresting polyrhythmical and polyharmonic passages full of the feel, the beat, and the excitement of the day. The first portion of the *Sacre* upon which we are carried as on the back of a mountain range, remains almost single among his com-

positions; the second portion, extraordinary in its feelings of old blood-passions seeking an outlet and filling the darkness with shapes of fear, with voluptuous melancholy, and penetrating desire, is less intensely spanned, more dependent for a full suspense upon the pantomime. What assures the ballets and purely instrumental pieces of Strawinsky an abiding interest, besides the prime quality of the themes and the colouration, are, first the homogeneity of the material assembled for the single pieces: *Petrouchka*, *Renard*, *L'Histoire du Soldat* are ideas; and second the classical quality of the musical line itself. Strawinsky, particularly the later, post-war-time, less primitive Strawinsky, offers the senses a kind of prismatic edge without intellectual association, a sort of abstract music. It is true the recent compositions appear to have greater cohesion and continuity than most of the earlier, to show a victory of the less over the more oriental characteristics, and to make the positive gesture. Strawinsky has been studying Bach, and is trying to write music in his sense. But the emotional effect without which there can be no pitch, no relation, no art, and which was so positive in *Petrouchka*, in the *Sacre*, and in *Renard*, is signally diminished. Of these later works only the *Symphonies For Wind Instruments* satisfy, and this piece is half a dozen years of age. Development in purely musical power has continued: the rhythmic play of *L'Histoire du Soldat* makes that of *Petrouchka* with its glorified dance-measures appear relatively simple. Strawinsky is learning to write a very telling counterpoint. Yet the newer classicizing pieces, entirely undescriptive in character and architectural in intention; particularly the *Octuor* and the piano concerto with their stirringly gemlike cutting, are distinctly literary. They are not only reminiscent of classical music. They want the strong exteriorizing push which produces natural transitions; they lean too largely for meaning on the classical forms they strive to fill. The suggestion is inevitable that for the sake of hurrying the recalcitrant process of resolution, of complete revolution and occidentalization, Strawinsky has taken temporarily to influencing his emotions with his conscious will, and has listened to the cajolements of a depressing spirit very much abroad since the war and original in the Paris by which he has pitched his tent.

It spreads abroad in all times of exhaustion, the spirit of French formalism, slackening the experimental, the loosening processes,

and weighing upon the remnants of the world feelings which give artistic forms their life. To such periods of self-doubt, discouragement, and regression, often highly keyed in the ability to see, weakened in the power to do, it offers plenary indulgence and comfort in the shape of sanctions to emotional niggardliness, to the replacement of feeling by surface feelings, and to the abnegation of personality. Its language is subtly ingratiating, for it uses the words of the high classic idea, repeating that "the artist must be present in his work like God in creation, invisible and almighty, everywhere felt but nowhere seen," insisting that perfect work of art consists "exclusively of the artist's subject and style without an emotion, an idiosyncrasy, which is not utterly transmuted." But what it actually abets is the very opposite from the grand style which enables the perfect work to live, free from the artist, by its own life. It is much closer to a pseudo-style, to mannerism, and to the formula: for the reason that the precept of impersonality works very dissimilarly in a discouraged and exhausted age than in an abundant one. Where the feelings are strong and decided, broad to timelessness and spaciousness, the counsel of impersonality brings an incentive to freedom, calm, and maturity, if freedom, calm, and maturity by chance are not already present. But where the feelings are basically weak and the outgoing impulses wounded and crushed, where a yearning for the security of authority and traditional sanctions already exists, and where it is the example of Montaigne and not that of Racine which is needed, it makes timid and binds. It sets up absolutes, and thereby relates art not to the totality of human resources, but to a kind of enfeebled intellectuality. It produces the imitative style, the mannerism. Possibly French formalism might have had a resurrection similar to its present one had there been no war and no after. Traditionalism, ancestor-worship, is strong among our Gallic friends. Together with their electric alertness something of the Chinaman is always present in them. There are times when their Jesuitical education for life which no longer exists renders the Mongolian resemblance striking. And possibly without a war formalism might have proven epidemic. Debussy had well-nigh made music speak in French and given unwonted kudos to French culture. The need of escaping from orientalism might have cleared the way for it. It is nevertheless highly questionable whether

without the war and the general attendant exhaustion—particularly without the comical American overestimation of France and French things—it would have prevailed as widely as it has come to do. American sentimentality, American feeling of inferiority which insisted upon finding a heroine among foreign nations, American insensibility which discovered a secret ally in French formalism, could not but increase the self-conceit of French artists and help prepare not only America, but all the world, for the French dispensation.

To-day formalism has its stupidly constricting grasp not alone on music, where it has temporarily produced an unengaging situation, but on art and literature throughout the world. It has an hundred names: intellectualism and aestheticism are the more popular ones; and aesthetic hypotheses, Byzantine preoccupation with questions of form, and glorification of automatic writing as a creative method are a few of the more amusing of its masks. Behind its hundred rationalizations it remains recognizably the force seeking to narrow and restrict the interests of the artist, to keep him from using the totality of his resources by cutting him off from the source of power in personality and feeling, to impose as absolutes upon him the material limits of other times and other conditions. Part of the comedy of the situation in music is the prophetic rôle assigned to Eric Satie, a function which decorates this modest musician somewhat as his grandfather's pantaloons the proverbial small boy. That the good and irresponsible master of Arcueil had a thin original vein of music is evident. He commenced as something of a clown in music, cute in his burlesque of the oriental, the arabesque, and the descriptive; and as in so many clowns, the burlesque existed thanks to a subtle art. He had a refined sensuous melodic gift; his little piano compositions, sorts of modern mazurkas, possess a gentle and haunting loveliness, a pricking subtlety of line. In all his thinness Satie belongs among the men Debussy, Schoenberg, Scriabine, Webern, who have brought new fineness of expression into music since Wagner. His aesthetic has certain virtues dear to modern artists. His music is modest in expression, product of the taste which abhors any discharge of fireworks from the breast. Quite as the modern man of letters commences not with the feeling alone, but with the word, and the modern painter with shape and line, so Satie conceived his

problem as a relation of musical masses and periods, a play of sonorities. Yet the good Satie makes a signal contrast to Racine, to Ingres, and to Flaubert among whom his friends delight to place him. His virtues are largely negative: he is important chiefly for what he refrains from doing; and it is again slowly dawning upon the world that a work of art is valuable not because of the absence of flaws, but because of the presence of positive qualities. It was by style that the classicists gave independence and impersonality to their works, and Satie was abjectly deficient in style. His music is without the imprint of a decided personality and filled with unamalgamated elements, classical, impressionistic, popular, even oriental. Nor had Satie any real projective power. He could not construct, nor produce a form; and the best that can be said of innumerable of his pieces is that they leave off just in time.

The very smallness of Satie's scope became a recommendation. Formalism found in him its man for the reason that both his limitation and his achievement appeared to justify its attitude. He was proclaimed a European personage by Milhaud, placed by Cocteau among the masters, and enshrined the patron and prophet of the association of five young Parisians called the Group of Six. That dignity, at least, was proper; for in the best of the number, Milhaud, Auric, and Poulenc, one part of daring, of freshness, of genius, even, is compounded with several of pure literature, stylelessness, surface cleverness, and traditionalism leaning upon the most conflicting authorities. Their gesture is modest, their technical demands simple, their inspiration quasi-popular and humorous; but the music produced by them remains undesirably personal. Formalism obtained by no means only in the newcomers. It worked backwards also; diverted from their courses men who had found them before the war; and Strawinsky stands by no means a solitary figure. Ravel, too, has made friends with the creature. In *La Valse* and *Tzigane* he has produced two brilliant pieces of mannerism, two assemblages of characteristic fragments of other men and other ages very adroitly patched together, formed into amusing concert pieces, but trivial and perverse at the heart of them. Formalism is coming to dominate quite as unlimitedly in Italy as in France. The modern Italian school led by Casella, Pizzetti, and Malipiero had begun partly in opposition to the brutality of Italian operatic music, partly with Straw-

insky in opposition to French smoothness and preciosity. Expression of a feeling of inferiority toward France is present in the bravado of all Italian artistic manifestos and was evident in theirs. Save in Malipiero talent was fresh in none of these men; yet the direction of their movement was aristocratic, contemporaneous, toward the large, toward the new limits which every healthy generation sets for itself and which constitutes its absolute. To-day, the direction is befogged. Again it appears that a sense of inferiority felt toward an object conceals an intense admiration directed toward it. The modern Italian school has more than seconded the French. Through Casella, its spokesman, we learn that it is the great privilege of the Italian school to lead in a Fascistic reaction against the music of the last years, and to turn to the limits and forms of the past. "Give us back tonality!" That is the tune! Tonality? The new diatonic feeling, equivalent to the old, filled with the Western genius, but inclusive of the great experience of orientalizing? Not so. The old C-major scale! Order is to be restored. Order? Ah yes indeed, order. In the sense of the Russian general who telegraphed his master, "*L'ordre règne à Varsovie!*"

And over the surface of the globe, many tired voices take up the song. The world is very weary. Music feels the depression. Sometimes, when we compare the confidence, the enthusiasm of yesterday with the shrunken faith of so much of the advance guard of to-day, it seems the procession of music has halted. A minute ago it was still surging up the thoroughfare underneath our avenue windows. Now people in stream cross over from curb to curb before the slackened body of march. Some few strands still press ahead through the wall of intercepting contrary motion. It never completely stops, the life of musical art. We have not yet heard the stillness left by the failure of all voices, the dormance of all instruments. And we will not deny that in its very disorganization the musical procession makes an exciting brilliant pool there at the head of the block, a wide bewildering play of conflicting emotions, gay costumes, mottled colour. An old market-fair visited in throngs by merchants from every land with strange rich gaudy wares and surcharged with modern excitement, one would say! Never so much experimentation and daring! New voices: South American, Negroid, Mexican, American, Magyar, Finnish, Rou-

manian, English, Hindu! But the body of it is nearly static. Its main movement is lost in circlings and hesitation, in cross and counter currents. The great world-feeling is shrunk. And one returns with relief to painting, to literature even. They too have been affected by the failure of confidence. But not as seriously, as yet.

Familiar voices will not fail to take advantage of the situation and declare the pseudo-classic reaction an expression of the Western will, the Western unconscious, and an effort of the Western intellectuals to protect their heritage from destruction at the hands of a certain sower of anarchism and sapper of the big blond and beastly soul. They will not be silenced by the truth that at least three of the leaders of the formalistic movement, Milhaud, Casella, and Ravel, and perhaps more, are not of distinctly "Nordic" blood; that the composers who first bridged a way for the hieratic East to move westward were not Jewish; and that eminent among those who continue the unconsciously motivated pilgrimage towards a new genuinely Western attitude, at least toward a balance of the two principles begun by their generation, stand Bloch and Schoenberg. For still it moves, and if energy has been slackened in all living composers, in certain, the essential direction has not been lost; and the modern orientation has been particularly inviting to the Jewish temperament. If the orientalism of Moussorgsky and Debussy awoke a corresponding orientalism in the Jewish breast, it awoke together with that superficial orientalism the particular affirmative, stubborn, aggressive spirit which has always united the Jewish race with Europe, made its culture an integral part of the strictly Mediterranean one, brought its Bible to port in the West, and made its modes reverberate in the choirs of Gothic cathedrals. In the rich, sombre, turgid machine which is the music of Bloch one feels the traditional attitude of the race, now become curiously identical with the ultra-Western one. The living element contributed by Bloch to music as Debussy left it is the overwhelming feeling of *avoiropois*. The feeling of mass and volume is strong in Stravinsky's music too. But Bloch's has it much more continuously. The architectural sense is developed in him as in perhaps no other living composer. There are respects in which Bloch belongs to a time before ours. He has a sumptuousity and pathos which go far back into a more romantic age. His instrumentation

remains the offspring of Debussy's, for though it is darker in colour and harsher in tone, brunette as compared to the Parisian blonde, it is essentially scintillant and velvety and vibrant with string tone. His orientalism is even extremer, spicier, and wilder than Debussy's or Rimsky's: at once intensely voluptuous and melancholy, rich and cruel; and what is marvellously original in his melodic line, and his manner of writing for the voice, issues from it. Yet a relatively immaterial and cloud-like, contemplative and elusively defiling music does not satisfy this composer. His own is filled with rough bold strokes and sharp attacks, with sudden impulsive starts, evident force and thrust and positive ponderous movement. He constructs, he rounds out volumes of sound, he develops his material with unflagging power. His ability to evolve and extend his ideas is second to none seen by the world since Beethoven's day. Occasionally, the forcefulness and swelling movement are too unrelieved to please entirely, too exaggerated; and the storming progressions of hollow fourths and fifths weary the nerves. But the 'cello rhapsody Schelomo, the quartette and the quintette and parts of the first violin sonata, and the symphony Israel are positive expressions, architectural forms in the spirit of great classic music. Assuredly a great deal of Bloch is not solid construction "like the art of the museums." There is an exaltation in his music that is over-hectic. And if he never indulges in the Jewish wail to the degree in which certain other Jewish artists wallow in it, one could wish it even further behind him. Bloch's greatest weakness is his want of self-criticism. By the side of the most extraordinary concentrated personal ideas, he lets appear others wanting in profile to the verge of commonness. The grave and rounded first two movements of the first violin sonata, are succeeded by a bombastic finale. One suspects another form of the conflict between two ways of feeling present in Strawinsky. Recently Bloch has been dissipating his energies in popular pieces. His second violin sonata is weightless and wandering. Doubtless that is the effect of the general imbroglio. One looks back on the fairly recent quintette as to the capes of a possibly vanishing continent.

Schoenberg creates in the same large intention as Bloch at his fiercest and most powerful, although in a manner somewhat dissimilar. His rapturous, grotesque, excessively compressed music is

even more centrally in the great tradition than Bloch's. The living, the poetic Schoenberg in his form and feeling stands in the position of very heir to the direct and believing Europeans who made the Western musical art, the classical and romantical both. The line of his music is directly related to both Wagner's and Brahms's. The relation is both matter of blood and of spirit. It moves, it heaves, it falls much as theirs does. It has their broad accent. It is full of the yearning, the striving, the profound effect of theirs, and stands immovable as iron. There is a definite Hebraic element in Schoenberg's music which was not present, it is true, in that of either of his artistic forbears. The poignant, clamant germinal theme of the D-minor quartette issues directly from the grey air of the synagogue. And Schoenberg's sensuous instinct has made him a man of his time, and distinguished his music from that of the tradition itself. His form is submitted to intensest concentration and pulses with the tempo of his age. He hears relations between far and close-lying tones where others perceive dissonances. His rhythm is more complex than Strawinsky's and not so predominantly based upon dance forms. He repeats fewer notes than Strawinsky does. Scarcely a living musician is so relentless in his truthfulness to self. There is no compromise in Schoenberg; a pity at times, for he is somewhat wrong-headed. And since his age is a shattered column, a broken and weary day condemning its members to relative loneliness, incommunication, and semi-mystical adventure, there is a ghostliness, a smothered anguish, a gossamer quality in his music infinitely beyond any similar traits in Wagner or Brahms. Even the uncreative spirit in his music is timely, for the theoretical and abstract spirit, mother of so much that is dry and unliving in it, is formalistic as well as Talmudic. But there is a Schoenberg who escapes formalism and theory entirely, who creates directly from intense passionate feeling religious in the sense of the old masters', and lets his feeling determine his form. He is primarily the truth-seeker, ardent and disinterested in his insatiable curiosity, happily compact of imagination and logical rigour, actively avid. Hence, a high-blooded spirit lives in what he drives to the condition of form. And hence the name Romantic; derogatorily imposed, but complimentary in spite of the wishes of the speakers. It was Stendhal, the classic, who declared that all art is romantic when it is produced and classical when it is accepted.

It is probable that beside Bloch's and Schoenberg's there will eventually be set the name of Ornstein. In his first period of production the young Russian-American composer instantaneously placed himself in the company of Moussorgsky and Strauss, Stravinsky, Bloch, and Varèse, and the others who have developed and are developing the force of musical expression beyond the limits of Wagner's naturalistic day. Temporarily, the habit of a sugary orientalism, and a restriction in range of ideas sets him somewhat below the order of men working on the basis of the entire past experience toward a new positiveness of form and feeling. Ornstein's double sonata, rich in sonority and ideas, in machine-like power and passionateness of expression, stands too solitary among his recent productions. He keeps the shape of gigantic foetus of the age of steel. Actually, there exists work by two living composers more closely approximating the term our period has set its development, than even that of Bloch and Schoenberg. Possibly neither Bartók nor Varèse are so completely developed upon the rung of musical evolution on which they are found, as the two others upon theirs; not so accomplished as artists. Certainly, this latest kind of music is minute in sum by the side of that of the past, and a tentative bit of life. This nevertheless is certain: that both the Hungarian and the Italo-Frenchman have produced a music freer of oriental form and feeling, more positive in both, than the rest upon whom the musical art of the affirmative future seems like to grow. Bartók's idiom with its piquant intervals has an un-European base. It points back to the Magyar folk-song and that, we know, is remotely Asiatic. Yet with Liszt and his oriental gipsy music this little upstart fungus has no kinship. It is not sinuous, sliding, and suggestive. It is possible that without the example of Moussorgsky and his folk-born Slavic style Bartók's style and compositions might not have appeared. His are homely, strong, and savoursome much as Moussorgsky's are. Under a surface of original silvery sensuousness, vaguely like the French, but free of preciosity, they bring a little tribe of fresh, puckish, and grotesque rhythms to European music. Yet there is this essential difference: that just as this music is without the characteristic oriental undulation, so too in its emotional effect it is melancholy, grim, and pessimistic at moments, nevertheless devoid of resignation and submission. There is the tone of tragedy in the simultaneously rich and gnomelike violin sonata, string quartette, and

Esquisses and *Bagatelles* for piano; but in the robust, the passionate sense. It is a talent autochthonous, humorous, and profoundly spontaneous, perhaps the freshest of our time, and positive in its expression. Bartók's violin sonata, recitative-like in quality, approximates an absolute self-determining music without verging on formalism. In Bloch and Schoenberg there is a dramatic element of which Bartók is free. True, there is a strain of the universal formality in Bartók as in his neighbour, Schoenberg. He, too, is occasionally guilty of a brain-spun music, little atonal and polytonal pieces without much inner necessity, showing his Budapest near neighbour to Schoenberg's Vienna. But there is an inspired playful Bartók above the theoretical planes—and in the last two movements of his string quartette as in the whole of his violin sonata he has created a music which has style, which is a play of sonorities, of musical shapes and lines, and also free, affecting, and personal. It marks an important return, and is strongly potential.

Equally positive in form and feeling is the music of Varèse, the latest prodigious addition to the company of composers. His ultra-strident brassy cubical tone-poems are if possible even more daringly conceived as a pure interplay of sonorities. With Varèse music becomes a thrilling opposition of volumes of sound, piercing, highly keyed, sharp as edges of brass and steel, a series of blunt, stubborn, stuttering masses rigidly held, even in moments of climax and stress, in a cubical shape. If the music of Varèse so extraordinarily retains the character of mass, it is undoubtedly largely because of his use of brief intervals of silence between the pronouncements of his blaring orchestras of woodwind and brass supported by fantastic arrays of percussion, sirens, and rattles; a technic corresponding to the suppression of connectives by certain contemporary poets in their poetry. There is a profound emotional tension in Varèse, a feeling of overwhelming pressure overcome, of human feeling taking the shape of the ponderous architectural piles of New York, a wild sense of material power. Varèse's idiom is even freer of oriental sinuosity than Bartók's; perhaps freer than that of any of the progressive unformalistic band. It is French, yet completely free of preciousness and jewellery. It is of a France older than Debussy's. It derives from the style of Berlioz, hard of edge and of substance both. And it is modern world, telegraphic in its terseness and compression, exquisitely permeated by

the quality of the cosmopolis. Varèse has done with the auditory phenomena of the great modern city and the port something analogous to what Picasso has done with the visual ones, and as little in the intention of description. Both have used the elfin and the brutal motifs of modern citified nature in building up subjective pictures which are alike relaxed and pulsant with the beat and the excitement of the present hour. If Varèse's constructive power eventually comes to equal his capacity for registering the most elusive auditory sensations, one will have to place him very high. For his sense of tone relations is as greatly in advance over Stravinsky's as Stravinsky's is over Debussy's.

Varèse, like Ernest Bloch, has come to the United States to work, not, we believe, without deep reason. America is the crucial point; it is in America the decision will arrive and the ancient European and Western feeling either reassert itself or perish, and with it the classical musical art. Positive feeling, fullness of desire and intensity of will and their inseparable companions, faith, "scepticism free of pessimism and mysticism devoid of resignation," are germane to the American. They helped build his land, and in fragmentary and disconnected form they wander through his outwardly vibrant, inwardly motionless world. Only, pioneering and puritanism and the republic for business only have buried them and have kept them buried and continue to bury them every day. What obtains is the very opposite of positive feeling. It is a feeling uncertain, impatient, fickle, a weakest consciousness of what exists outside and is called nature and an hundred other names, and is owned by no man, and is the life of all men taken in unison. It is the European equivalent to this American insensibility that America helped nourish in the old world, and continues to feed. In 1917 the United States became an integral portion of the old continent, adding to Europe's condition of doubt a new dissolvent, and corroborating the "no" of the formalistic spirit. Perhaps simultaneously an older European spark was passed across to it. Some belief in life actually stirring several years before vividly intensified its struggle for establishment. The last decade has seen warm potential talents appear not only in American plastic and literary, but in musical art as well; and music is the most slowly evolving, the most social of them all. If Sessions, Copland, and the other important native-born composers as yet remain some-

thing of candidates and participate in certain of the less positive attitudes of the contemporary European musical world, their appearance is gigantic proof of the rebirth of veritable feeling in America. Even when it is not yet positive, feeling contains the potential of positiveness. Hence the career of American music together with that of all American art is identified with the career of music and of art in general. It is doubtful whether musical life can attain its objective independently of American artistic, spiritual life. In watching either of them, or both of them, we are actually watching one thing, for the love of "music" and of "life."

INSECTS

BY ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

Clockwork beings, winding out their lives—
souls would kill them as machines kill us.
They are not stranger to us. Their shellacked
and felted bodies built in sections, grooved
to make elastic their wire-tendoned strength,
we too have made with rougher metals
and with coarser cloth. Clanging, they fill
the booming Summer, fill the grass, the air,
an exposition of well geared machines.
They whirr and hammer; the sun's rays
dart power to them on glittering rails;
and through the pastoral night, the stationed stars
now seem a swarm of midges. Trembling on
the unseen eaves of space, the milky way,
swings a rumpled spider web, where guttering,
the captured stars exert their dim,
funereal, phosphorescent light.

KERSTA

BY COUNT EDUARD VON KEYSERLING

*Translated From the German by Amy Wesselhoeft von Erdberg
and E. Drew Arundel*

Common as light is love
—*Shelley.*

IT had begun to thaw a little. The November snow on the road to the church was very wet and the heavy sleigh jerked and jolted. Four women, wives of recruits, sat in it—Marri, Katte, Ilse, and Kersta, the daughter of the cottager Annlise. They had just been married in the church. To-morrow their husbands would have to leave them for the barracks. They had tied big blue kerchiefs over their bridal crowns and sat there in the sleigh—four blue pointed cones nodding with every jolt. Reuben Jehze was driving. He was very drunk and lashed the shaggy little horses unmercifully. The husbands followed close behind—two to a sleigh. They had been drinking heavily and sang with loud, hoarse voices. The women, silent and patient, jolted back and forth in their blue kerchiefs. Kersta was the smallest. With her round rosy face, round light blue eyes, and round nose, she looked like a child; her mouth, on the other hand, with its drooping corners was the rather careworn mouth of the Lithuanian peasant woman. She stared dully out into the grey mist that hung over the plain. The juniper bushes and the crows looked strangely black against all this grey, and the bare reddish alders seemed mere blotches on the heath. The whole colourless picture swayed gently before Kersta's eyes—as though she were slowly rocked to and fro in a swing at the Easter festival.

They had stopped at every public-house on the road and Kersta's tall Thome had lunched over to the women's sledge. "Frozen stiff, little woman, eh?" and he held out the brandy bottle. Kersta smiled stiffly with her frozen lips and drank. The brandy made you warm and comfortable; besides, it made you stop thinking,

which was nice too. The whole misty world before her grew more and more vague for Kersta, even Jehze's broad back seemed to be getting further and further away. The day's impressions on the other hand kept coming back to her like vivid dreams, the same ones, again and again, like people passing you on the merry-go-round at the Schoden fair. Wedding! Wedding! In the morning, the putting on of the fine white linen bridal chemise, so fine and cold that it made Kersta shiver from head to foot; the bridal crown that was pressed down so hard on her forehead that it hurt. There must be a red line on her forehead now. Then the church, chilly and solemn. Kersta's new shoes made a fine clattering on the stone-paved aisle. She had to take care not to slip as if on ice.

The pastor had a round red face and smacked his lips when he spoke, as if he were eating something good; but, dear me! he did preach beautifully—about the men going away, about being faithful, and about the Word of God. Kersta had cried, of course. Soldiers' wives always cry at their weddings—and besides, it's good to cry—to cry till your face gets warm and wet and to heave such big sighs that the hooks on your bodice creak. She had cried harder than the other women, that she could certainly say when they discussed it later. Afterwards, in the public-house by the church, they had had a drink and the men had begun to quarrel. Everything had been just as it should be at a wedding.

Wedding! Wedding! jingled the bells on Jehze's little horses and Kersta began her dream all over again with the fine cold bridal chemise. The three other women were silent, staring out into the mist with the same fixed look that seemed to see nothing. Only when a hare ran from a field across the road they all four cried out, "Look, a hare!" and smiled stiffly with their frozen lips.

They drew up before the village inn. There stood the wedding guests in their best clothes and shouted. Pale women's and children's faces pressed close to the dim windows of the huts; everybody wanted to see the brides. That gave Kersta a nice festive feeling. A young wife coming back from the marriage ceremony is an important person and the wedding day is the happiest of your life.

At the door of the public-house Kersta waited for Thome; they would have to go in together. She stood there very gravely and talked with the old women across the street. Even the vil-

lage elder spoke to her and the girls stared curiously at the bridal crown. Kersta, the daughter of the cottager Annlise, was not used to being treated by everyone with so much friendliness and respect. She was small, poor, had only one goat, and had so far not counted; but when you're married, you're somebody. Sheer pride made Kersta's round childish face red and shiny like an apple.

Now the men drove up, singing and shouting. Thome lurched over to Kersta, took her round the waist, and lifted her up in the air: "Not very big, but heavy as a bag of flour," said he. Everybody laughed. Kersta flushed with pleasure, and was very grateful to Thome.

In the big room of the inn the wedding party sat down to the white board tables. They were all very silent and solemn and fell to on the milk and noodle soup. For a time the only sound to be heard was a loud monotonous gulping. Then came the pork, then mutton, and then pork again. The steam from the food filled the room with a thick warm mist. Kersta ate eagerly, ate so much that at last she leaned back exhausted and managed somehow to undo the lower hooks of her bodice. "Now this is a real wedding—it's fine," she said to herself. She stroked Thome's sleeve gently. Now she had a man of her own, he belonged to her. It's good to have a husband. "Drink, little wife, drink!" said Thome.

Outside it began to grow dark. Lights were brought into the room, tallow candles stuck in beer bottles. The little yellow flames had shining rings of coloured light about them in the steamy room. The band, a fiddle, a clarionet, and an accordion, began a polka. "Ah! now comes the dancing!" Kersta sighed with deep content. She stepped outside the door for a moment. It was dark, a damp wind swept across the snow, and the clouds, grey as unbleached linen, hung low in the heavens. "To-morrow it'll snow," thought Kersta.

Down the silent village street the little cottages huddled together; here and there a light burnt dimly in a window, a child cried, a woman sang a lullaby, always the same weary dragging tune. And that silent, ugly, little black thing down there at the end of the street was Annlise's cottage. To-morrow everything would be over as if it had never happened. Kersta would be down

there again living with her mother and —— She drew her sleeve across her eyes. Why did she want to cry? To-morrow would be time enough for that!

She went inside and danced. That was fine. When a man's strong arm turns you round and round and you feel his great hot hand burning on your back, you just stop thinking altogether. There's nothing left of you but your body with its hot blood and thumping heart. The scene grew more and more vague and dreamlike for Kersta. The heavy figures spun solemnly round in the thick tobacco smoke, the men beat time with their heels; it sounded like the busy fall of flails on the threshing floor. "That's good," thought Kersta. "I'll never have as good a time again." Later a row began and the men came to blows. Kersta joined in with the other women, but this time with the proud feeling of screaming for her own husband as she grabbed the other men by the hair. Finally, singing loudly, the young men and girls led the pair to the end of the village street to Annlise's hut, where the bridal bed was prepared.

While Kersta lit the candle in the little room, Thome threw himself heavily onto the bed. He was very drunk and fell asleep at once. Kersta pulled off his boots for him, straightened the pillow, and lay down herself. Her limbs ached with weariness. When she shut her eyes, the bed seemed to rock like a boat. Still she could not really sleep. Every time when the dream began again, where she was in the church or spinning round in the public-house till the ribbons of her bridal crown flew out like whip-lashes, something seemed to startle her awake. She stared into the darkness and thought; something dreadful was waiting for her, what could it be? Oh! yes—to-morrow her husband would be gone and the old life would go on as before—the wedding was over and there would be nothing, nothing nice for a long, long time.

Outside the morning dawned, the window panes grew blue. Kersta sat up and looked down at Thome. He was sleeping heavily; his fair hair lay damp and untidy on his forehead, his face was very red and from his half open mouth came a deep regular snoring. Kersta slowly stroked his breast, his arms. "Sh! Sh!" she said as to a child. Her husband belonged to her like her chemise, her knitting, her goat, more even than the goat, for that belonged to her mother too. That was as it should be. Now

she had what every girl wants and prays for, a man; and he was big, too, and strong. But what was the good of it if she had to give him right up again? Heavens! what a mean shame, better not think about it at all. Kersta got out of bed and took the milk pail. She would go and milk the goat.

Outside a strong wind was blowing and damp snow fell. The plain lay grey-blue in the early dawn. On the horizon, above the black line of the distant wood stretched a dim white light. Kersta stood still as usual, shaded her eyes with her hand, screwed up her nose, and stared out sulkily into the growing daylight. Down the village street, in front of the little grey houses stood other women with their milk pails. Shading their eyes with their hands like Kersta, they too looked sulkily into the grey dawn as if they expected no good from the coming day.

Kersta shivered. She ran into the barn, a low shed, where the goat, pig, and hens lived. The air was warm and heavy here. The hens flapped their wings on the perch. The pig grunted comfortably to itself. Kersta crouched down beside the goat and began to milk. The milk ran pleasantly warm over her fingers. A comfortable drowsiness overcame the little woman. She leaned her head on the goat's back and cried, not the loud official crying of the wedding, nor as she would cry to-day in the town when her husband went away; this time she just cried like a child. The tears came easily and bathed her face as if she were washing it in warm water, and she was very, very sorry for herself. Crying, she fell into a quiet, dreamless sleep. The goat stood quite still, only turning its head to cast a motherly glance at the sleeping girl with its calm yellow eyes.

Kersta woke up, hearing her mother say at her side, "Good heavens! she's fallen asleep milking! What are you milking for to-day, anyway?"

"Somebody's got to," answered Kersta half asleep.

"Yes, do it and go to sleep over it!" said Annlise. The old woman spoke roughly as usual, but for all that Kersta thought she heard an undertone of satisfaction and respect. But, of course you would speak differently to a married woman from the way you would to a girl.

"Go along, and make the fire, your husband must be off early." Kersta jumped up. Why! of course; to-day was no ordinary day;

to-day she could put on her best clothes and drive to town; to-day she would be noticed and pitied by everyone. There was some comfort in that.

The village elder was to drive the recruits to town in a big sleigh. The mothers, fathers, and wives were to follow to say good-bye at the station.

During breakfast Thome talked of nothing but the law-suit and gave his wife instructions. Peter Ruze had taken possession of the little holding of Dundur, on the left of the village towards the wood; this belonged by rights to Kersta, she being the nearest blood relation of the late owner, while Peter was only his step-daughter's husband. In Kersta Thome had married the claim to the farm and it was her duty to prove her rights in his absence. "Go to Lawyer Jakobsohn, the Jews are always the sharp ones, and besides he's cheap. Don't let them do you." Kersta put on a wise look. She was well aware of her responsibility. "I'll manage all right," she said. "I'm no fool."

"If you'd been a fool, I shouldn't have married you," and with that Thome wound up.

With much shouting and joking the recruits climbed into their sleigh. The women and children stood round and cried. The four young wives drove together again in one sleigh. It was snowing faster now. The blue pointed cones nodding opposite each other as yesterday, grew white with it.

When they reached the woods, Marri said, "What good do we get out of it anyway? To-morrow things'll go on the same as ever." "Well, there's no changing that," said the other three and sighed. Later, as they came out on to the road by the sea, Ilse said, "If we don't have some frost soon, the rye will rot."

The others sighed and groaned, "Times are hard enough as it is." Nothing more was said during the drive.

In the town they had scarcely time to be sad. They had so much to look at everywhere. Then there was the long wait before the town-hall until the men came out, the meal in the public-house, the brandy and cakes, and finally the parting at the station and the loud wailing. Thome slapped Kersta on the back, "Cheer up, we're not going to die there, you know. Send along money sometimes, food's generally short."

"Yes! yes!"

"Remember the law-suit. Go to the lawyer."

"Yes! yes!"

"Keep your wits about you or I'll find myself fooled when I come back."

"Yes! yes!"

When the train had gone, the women still stood on the platform and moaned softly, "Oh! Lord! Oh! Lord!"

Kersta was the first to stop. She had to go to the lawyer's.

She waited there in a nice warm room. The lawyer was a friendly little man, who listened to her patiently and held out hopes of success. He even joked, chuckled Kersta under the chin, and said, "Such a pretty little soldier's wife and she's got to do without a husband for such a long time, dear! dear!" That was a good omen for the law-suit.

It was already getting dark, when the long line of sleighs set out for home. Huge stripes of fiery cloud reached across the pale sky. The sun, red as a raspberry and as though flattened by the sea, was slowly disappearing. The crinkled, grey sea was tinged with crimson. The waves rustled softly like silk.

The soldiers' wives were worn out with all the walking and standing and drinking and crying. They sat there, dull and patient, staring blankly into the fading sunset. In the wood as it grew dark and the moon rose over the black shaggy tops of the pines, the hearts of the lonely women grew heavy. They could not cry any more, so they sang, the first song that came into their heads, sending the plaintive notes far out into the wood:

"Come home early, darling, early.

Late you must not stay,

Your flutt'ring kerchief else will tear

The thorn bush by the way."

What had been the good of this marrying anyway? Life in Annlise's cottage went on just as before. Kersta milked the goat, gathered sticks in the wood, went on with her weaving. In December, when it was dark by three in the afternoon, she crept into the narrow little bed of her girlhood at six. They had not troubled to get another, what was the good? At two in the morning, she had had enough sleep and seated herself shivering at the loom

again. Day in, day out, the same dull and joyless life: like the shuttle that shoots to and fro through the grey woollen threads. Kersta could only tell that she was married by the fact that she wore her braids bound round her head now, instead of hanging down her back. On holidays she did not go to dance in the public-house and on Saturday nights no boy stole softly in to see her. The chief part of a girl's life was gone for her; thinking about the boys, waiting for the boys, crying over the boys. Who was there for her to talk to anyway? The girls talked about their young men, the women about their children, their husbands, and their housekeeping. Kersta had none of these. She grew silent and sulky. There were bad times when she could not sleep at night and tossed from one side to the other. All around her deep silence. The winter stars twinkled brightly through the tiny window-panes. She could hear every sound in the neighbouring huts. Bille's baby cried. Jehze came home—he was drunk and stumbled over the threshold. Now he beat Bille; she screamed and scolded. Kersta felt very lonely. Why had not she all that? She wanted her husband, her Thome. The tears ran down her cheeks and she bit into the bed-clothes.

But there was the law-suit. That filled her life, gave her dignity and importance. Once a week she took the four hour walk to town to consult her lawyer. She knew every tree, every stone on the long road. She knew them in every sort of weather; if it were not so cold that her fingers froze, she knitted a stocking as she went. Everyone knew the little woman with the red kerchief, the knitting, and the big law-suit. The wood-cutters on the way called out to her, "Hullo! soldier's Kersta, what's it like without a husband?" Kersta stopped and wiped her hot face with her sleeve, "All right, of course. Why not?"

"Thome can stay away six years more, eh?"

"Let him—for all I care!"

The men's laughter rang through the wood: "Ha! ha! she likes being alone! Well, and how goes the law-suit?"

"Finely! If you've got right on you're side, you don't have to worry."

"You don't say!"

She often met the assistant forester, a fine young gentleman, with a black moustache, shiny brown eyes, a green coat collar, and

a silver watch chain. He stopped Kersta each time and joked with her.

"Well, little soldier's wife, how are you?"

Kersta flushed a little and bent back her head so as to look at him, "All right, of course."

"And Thome still gets on all right without a wife?"

"Oh! he's got plenty of Poles and Jewesses where he is!"

"Oh! and you've got enough young men here, eh?"

"There's enough of them about."

"Goodness, if I were a little woman like you, rosy as an apple, you wouldn't catch me sitting round waiting for one of those old soldier men to come back."

"Well, who's waiting?" Kersta laughed loudly, as you do when a fellow makes a joke.

"Oh! aren't you? We should make a good pair. You're like a little sparrow and I'm so tall."

"Fine!" called back Kersta, as she walked on. "We'll make a contract at the next festival." Oh, she knew well enough how to joke with the boys. One day the forester seized her to kiss her and throw her to the ground, but she broke away and ran off. She laughed all day at the thought of it. At home in bed the forester's eyes were always before her, and when she heard the boys tapping gently at the girls' windows, she grew restless and could not sleep.

When the spring came, these walks into town were easier. She could take her time on the way home, the evenings were so light. She often walked very slowly, just step by step, as though she could not make up her mind to leave the wood. "It's queer," she said to herself, "these spring evenings make you feel so lazy, so lazy you can't even think of the law-suit. It's funny!"

Among the tall firs stood birches in their fresh young leaves, looking as if someone had hung a thin green veil over them; or something white shines through the wood, like someone wrapped in a white sheet; that is a wild cherry in full bloom and you can smell it a verst away. In the meadow by the wood, stand deer, black and silent in the mist as in a pool of milk; and everywhere, from the hills and pastures ring the songs of the girls, the songs Kersta knows so well. On such nights a girl's half mad and it's no use trying to sleep. Kersta knew that too. She, too, had sat

out all night long, her hands clasped round her knees, and had sung and sung, sending the notes far out into the night, and then had waited: Will someone answer? Will someone come? Will not a fair moustache soon be pressed closely to her lips? Kersta went over all this again as she loitered on the road listening into the wood.

One night Kersta heard a crackling in the wood. A stag was startled from its covert and called loudly; again there was a crackling and the forester stood before her.

"Little little soldier's wife," he said. The moon was high in the heavens and made his eyes and his broad white teeth shine brightly. "You on the road again?"

Kersta stopped and looked up at him. Yes, she had been to town again, of course. What else did he expect?

"It's a good night for walking."

"Yes, very good."

The forester laughed, looked at Kersta, and was silent. She too, was silent and waited. At last he put his arm round her shoulders and said, "You and I, you and I, come!"

"Why, what's got you?" said Kersta. She tried to say it in the rough joking voice that you use with boys, but it sounded rather gentle and uncertain; and she let herself be led away from the road into the wood. When they were under the trees and the forester stroked her cheek and breast with his great, hot hand, she knew she would do whatever he wanted.

The morning dawned, the grouse had already come out into the meadow and were drumming as Kersta walked hurriedly towards her village.

"Oh, well," she thought, "if you spend the night in the woods with a fellow, things are bound to happen, and there you are."

After this the forester often met Kersta on her way home from town. Mother Annlise scolded, "What are you home so late for?"

"The law-suit," said Kersta. "Lord bless you, a law-suit's not finished as quickly as a boiled egg." The girls' singing and the boys' tapping at the windows no longer excited Kersta.

About hay time Kersta found she was going to have a child. That was bad. What was she to do now? She went into the barn to the goat, where no one could see her, and cried for an hour; then she went quietly back to work. When she met the

forester, she was very cross and scolded. But what good did that do?

Silent, pale, with tight lips she went about her duties. She did all the heavy summer work, was very short with her mother, struck the goat when she milked, and went to town oftener than ever to carry on the law-suit. If she should lose the law-suit, then she herself was lost, then Thome would beat her and the child to death. How about the child anyway? Oh, well, a child gets born and dies and Thome wouldn't be home for a long time yet. For all that, she could not help thinking of the child, of its cradle, the linen for the sheets, and what it would be like to have something so little, warm and soft, pressed to her and moving and putting its lips to her breast: "Oh! bother! we'll hope to goodness it won't live."

When the potato harvest came round Kersta could no longer conceal her condition. She went straight along her furrow slowly, with bent back gathering the potatoes into her skirt. She heard Bille say behind her, "Kersta 'll have a present ready for Thome, when he comes home. My! won't he be pleased!" The other women laughed loudly and the laughter spread over the whole field. "I knew it would have to come and now I've got it," thought Kersta. Her knees shook and her potatoes fell to the ground again. She straightened up and looked at the women with the angry helpless look of an animal at bay. Then she bent over her furrow again and went on working in silence. There was no end to the gibes now. When Kersta went across the field to put her potatoes into the cart, she had to go under fire; "Say, Kersta, where'd you have the present made? In town? You can get 'em cheap there. Comes, I s'pose from having a law-suit, or did Thome send it by post?" Kersta was silent. They'll get through with their jeering sometime and then there'll be peace. She had a bad time with her mother too, who grumbled and scolded all day long. What good did that do? "You might as well take things as they come," Kersta said to herself. "Life's hard enough anyway." This helped her; and she took things less to heart.

One day in the winter, when Kersta had gone into the wood for faggots, she was seized with the pains. The women put her on the sledge and, screaming with laughter, dragged her back to the village. Kersta gave birth to a girl. So the child was there and it wasn't going to die either; it was a sturdy thing with brown

shiny eyes in its careworn infant's face. The people in the village had got used to the fact that Kersta had a child. Nobody thought of any more jokes. But Kersta herself now had something more to live for than the law-suit. The law-suit was the most important of course, but a baby needs you all day long; you rock it, you nurse it, on warm evenings you sit with it on the doorstep and sing, "Rai, rai, raa—ra—ta—."

"Dear Kersta," wrote Thome, "I'm writing to tell you that things have gone badly. I've been sick. Now they're sending me home. I shall be back next week. Keep well. Your husband Thome."

Kersta had read the letter with difficulty by the fire light.

"What does he say?" asked her mother.

"Oh! what should he say?" answered Kersta. She sat down on the bench by the fire, for she felt rather shaky. "Is he all right?" asked her mother again. Kersta did not answer, but stared into the fire.

"Why don't you answer? Tell me."

"He's coming back," said Kersta, in a quiet dry voice.

"If he only won't hurt the child," thought Kersta. This must have been in her mother's mind too, for she said, "You'll have to put the cradle where it won't be always under his nose." Yes, she would see to that. They sat silent for a time beside each other, then sighed and got up to go to bed. In bed her mother called out, "Is the law-suit going all right?"

"How else should it go?"

"Oh, well, then!"

On a Saturday afternoon Kersta stood in front of the inn waiting for the sleigh which was to bring the discharged soldiers from the town. It was bitterly cold. The sun was setting red in a glass-clear sky. All the women of the village had collected before the public-house. They wrapped their hands in their aprons and, screwing up their noses, looked down the road. There were the soldiers! They shouted and waved their caps.

"Well! you're still pretty small, but you're alive all right," said Thome, as he stood before Kersta. Kersta blushed; she had almost forgotten that Thome was so big. She felt shy and confused.

"Why shouldn't I be alive?" she said half laughing, but the tears filled her eyes and she stroked Thome's sleeve.

"Come," she said, "supper's ready."

"Supper—hm-hm." Thome laughed light-heartedly. "She wants to feed me up, I'm too thin for her." So home they went, Thome ahead, Kersta trotting after.

The cottage room, trimmed with evergreens, was lighted by two tallow candles. The table was set with a white cloth and the floor strewn with pine needles. Mother Annlise stood at the fire and stirred the pot.

"Well, Mother, you still about? Old bones still holding together, eh?" cried Thome.

"They'll hold out awhile yet," said Annlise. "It's good to see you back again."

Thome sat down to the table and the pork was served him. He ate slowly, chewing each morsel carefully and attentively, and, looking at Kersta, said, with his mouth full, "Landowner, landowner of Dundur." Kersta sat opposite to him, her hands folded in her lap. "Funny," she thought, "how good-looking a man can be!" His face was so burnt that his fair moustache looked almost white, but just look at those shoulders, those arms, that neck! It's good to have a strong husband.

Thome had satisfied the worst of his hunger. He wiped his moustache with the back of his hand and leaned back in his chair. "Now, let's hear about the law-suit," he said. Kersta put on an air of great importance, as she began her account. There seemed no end to the clever things the lawyer had said, and that she herself had said and done. The farm was as good as hers. Thome listened, all attention and respect. "My! what a lot of brains for such a little woman!" That spurred Kersta on. From the further corner came a faint whimpering. Kersta, without stopping her tale, rose mechanically, went over to the cradle, opened her jacket, took the child, and began to nurse it. She raised her voice a little to be heard from the other end of the room. Then, suddenly, she stopped in the middle of a sentence. Mother Annlise quietly left the room. "Now I'm in for it," thought Kersta. Thome was coming towards her, slowly, with his head thrust forward, as if he wanted to catch something. She put the child quickly back into the cradle and planted herself in front of it. She grew very pale, and stuck out her underlip; her round eyes opened wide and grew glassy like those of a frightened animal. Her hands trembled so, that she folded them tight on her stomach. Thus she stood waiting; "Now it's coming as it had to."

"What's that?" Thome's voice was low as if he were being strangled.

"Well, what do you suppose?"

"Where—where did that child come from?"

"The child—well—where should it come from?"

She brought this out fiercely and defiantly, but now she put the knuckles of both hands into her eyes and began to cry loudly with her mouth wide open, like a child who has been caught doing something wrong.

"So that's the sort you are!" Thome spat it out. He seized her by the wrist and dragged her into the middle of the room; "You'd deceive your husband, would you, you bitch, you! I'll kill you and the brat too!"

He began to beat Kersta unmercifully. She howled, defended herself. "His fist's like iron, oh! oh!" she thought. "He's so strong. Heavens! he'll kill me." How it hurt—and yet—and yet—somehow it satisfied something in her. She felt through it all that she had a husband.

Thome was out of breath. He flung his wife from him with a curse, spat, and sat down at the table again. Kersta lay motionless on the floor, smarting all over. She looked at Thome sideways. Had he finished? She would almost rather have him go on than have him sit there and pay no attention to her. Thome, his head on his hand, sat there brooding. Kersta got up painfully, sat down on the bench by the fire, rubbed her aching limbs, and cried softly to herself. "Poor man!" she thought.

The candles had burned very low and had long black noses. Little hard grains of snow tapped outside on the window panes. A cricket began to chirp briskly on the hearth. "What's he going to do?" thought Kersta; "Will he beat me again to-night?" Thome drank some brandy, yawned, and began to pull off his boots. Kersta got up and pulled them off for him. Then he undressed and threw himself on to the bed; it creaked as if it would break. Kersta could not help smiling. "He is a heavy man!" She put out the candles and sat down again by the hearth. The glowing embers threw a faint rosy light on to the bare feet of the little woman, who sat there, anxious and motionless, listening to every breath her husband drew.

"You," came suddenly from the bed. Kersta started up

frightened. "What are you sitting there for? Aren't you coming to bed?"

"What else should I do?" answered Kersta in her gruffest voice; but as she went over to the bed, her heart grew warm within her. Now, she too, was like other wives.

For a time, life was hard in the little hut. Thome's rage at the wrong done him flared up again and again; then there were blows and screams. At the public-house he vowed he would beat both wife and child to death. The child had to be continually hidden from him. "He'll get used to it," said Kersta calmly, "men-folks are all that way, and there's no changing that." And, in fact, as time went on, Thome spoke less and less of the child and more and more of the law-suit. They discussed how many cows, how many pigs they would keep on the little farm; there was plenty to talk about. He forgot the child, ceased to notice it, no longer spat when he passed the cradle. Kersta could nurse the baby without having to hide.

Thome decided to go to town himself to look after things. For a woman Kersta was bright, but when it comes to real brains you want a man.

"That's sure," said Kersta, "who else should have 'em?"

So off he drove. Late in the evening he came back rather drunk and very jovial. The law-suit was won.

"Come here, young farmer's wife," he called out, "here's something for you." He put a red silk kerchief on Kersta's head. "A farmer's wife must be fine!"

"A kerchief? What did you do that for?" asked Kersta, and laughed.

"Oh, because—" and half turning away, as if embarrassed, Thome tossed a fine white roll on the table; "and that—there—I bought for—for the—"

"For what?"

"Well, for the brat."

Kersta took the roll and pressed it gently against her breast.

Now, perhaps, after all, a little better time was coming for her, too.

ELEGY

BY JOSEPH AUSLANDER

Fled is the swiftness of all the white-footed ones
Who had a great cry in them and the wrath of speed:
They are no more among us: they and their sons
Are dead indeed.

So the river-mews twist in long loops over the river,
Wheeling and shifting with the wind's and the tide's shift,
And pass in a black night—and nothing is left but a shiver
To show they were swift.

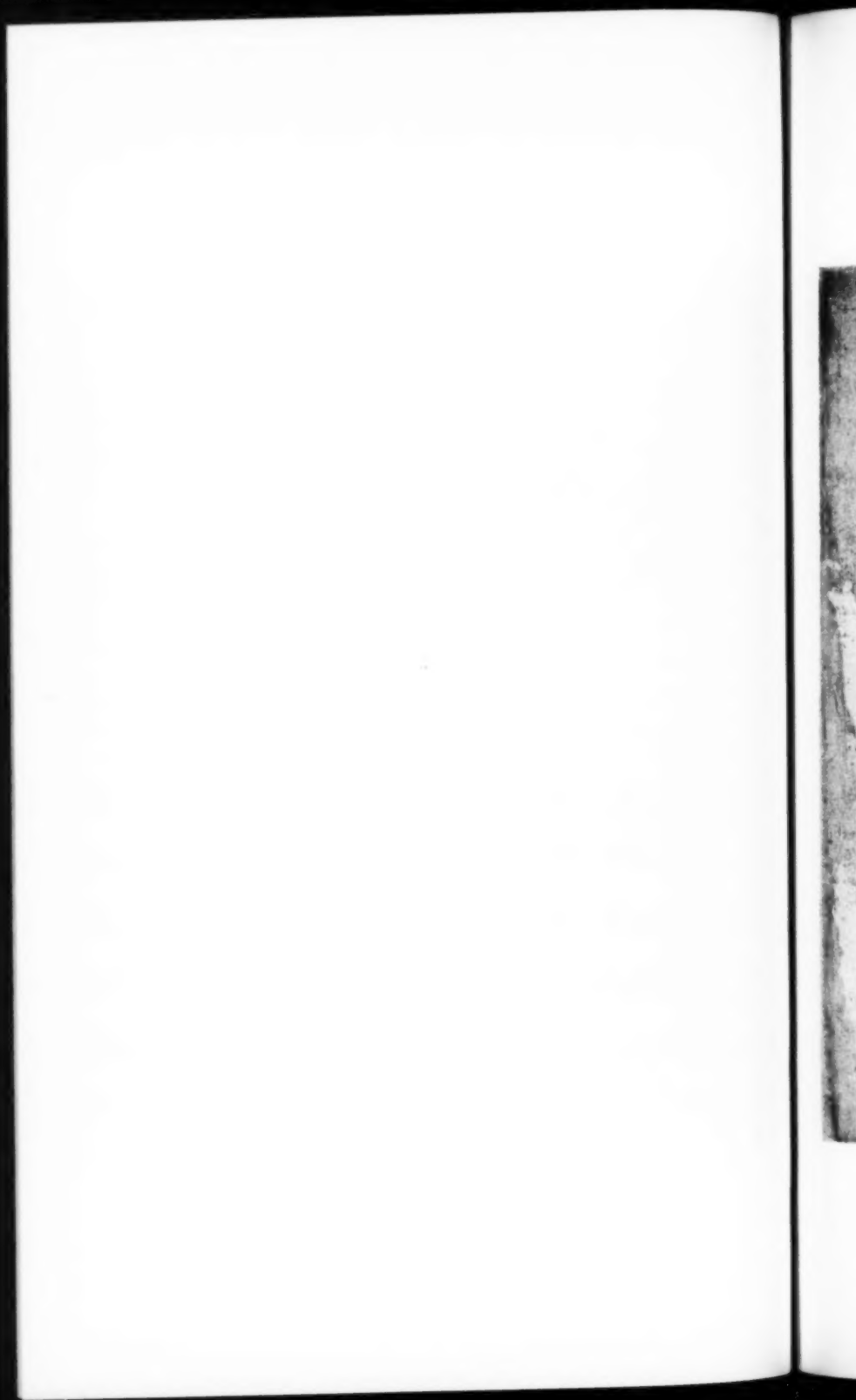
Whenever I hear the gull's throat throb in a fog,
Watch the owl's velvet swoop, the high hawk's lonely paces,
I think on the heels of him who lies like a log
And his friends under turf and the rain creeping down on
their faces.

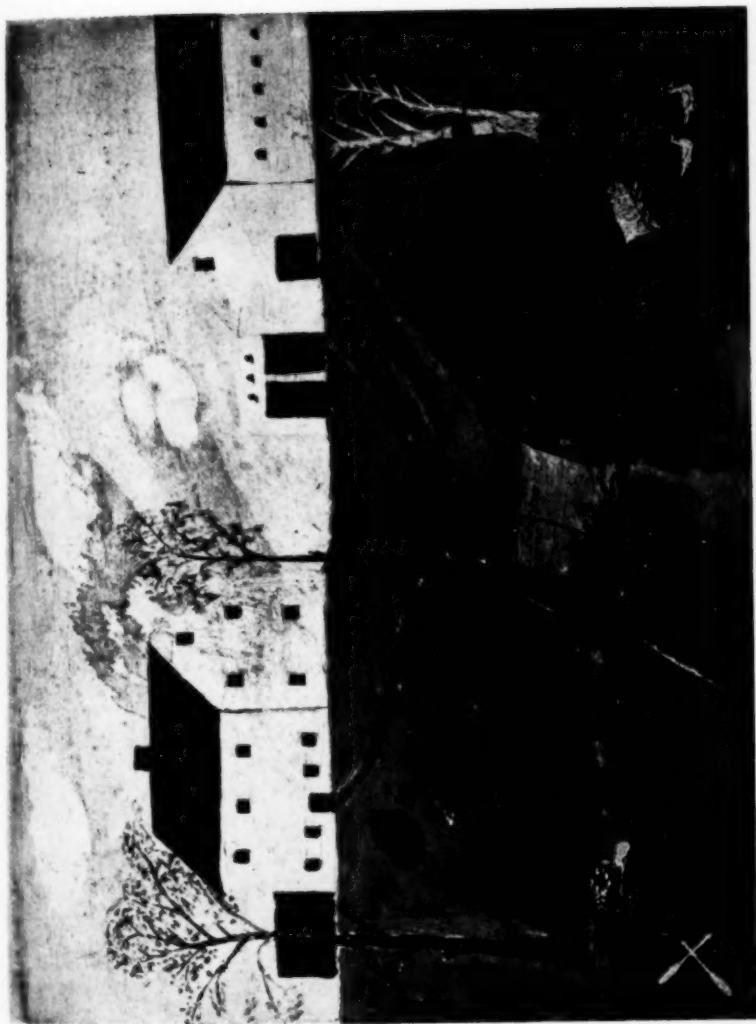
And my heart goes sick and the hell in my heart could break
To the edge of my eyes for the mates I shall not be knowing
Anywhere now though the ice booms loud in the lake
And the geese honk north again and the heron's going.



BENEATH A WILLOW-TREE. EARLY AMERICAN

Property of Aileen Dreuer

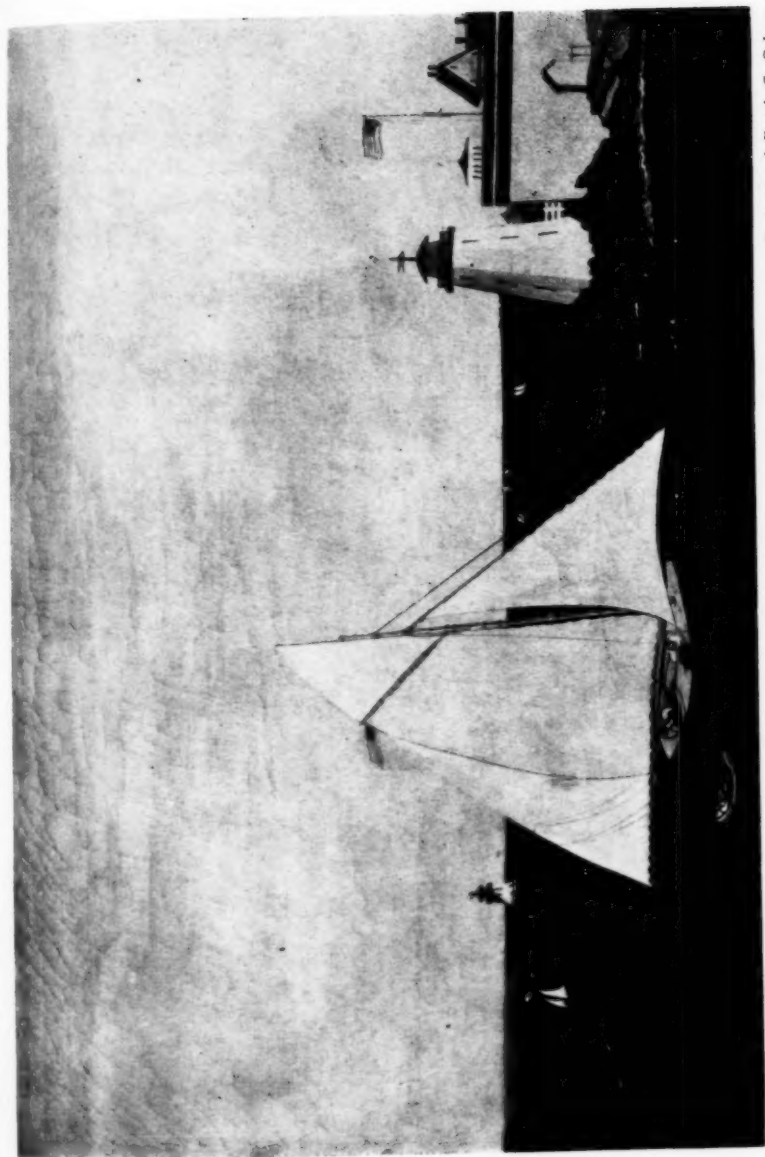




WHITTIER'S HOME. EARLY AMERICAN

Property of Alice Newton





Property of Frank C. Osborn

PORTSMOUTH HARBOR. EARLY AMERICAN

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THE DANDYISM OF WALLACE STEVENS

BY GORHAM B. MUNSON

THE impeccability of the dandy resolves itself into two elements: correctness and elegance. Both elements transcend merely good taste, for correctness implies a knowledge of the rules governing the modes of expression, feeling, thinking, conduct; and elegance is, of course, good taste that has been polished.

Until the advent of Wallace Stevens, American literature has lacked a dandy. Of swaggering macaronis there have been a-plenty, but the grace and ceremony, the appropriate nimbleness of the dandy, have been lacking. Certainly as a craftsman, he has absorbed the teachings of the academy; at any rate he can trust himself to the musical risks of poetry—making use of alliteration, assonance, free rhymes, irregular stanzaic forms, and *vers libre*—and can be counted on to overcome them. The effective use of exclamation in poetry is exceedingly difficult, because the accent must be carefully prepared for and must coincide with a real rise in the material. He has many times run the risk of over-exclamation, always winning, and perhaps most handsomely in Bantams in Pine Woods:

“Chieftain Iffucan of Azcan in caftan
Of tan with henna hackles, halt!

Damned universal cock, as if the sun
Was blackamoor to bear your blazing tail.

Fat! Fat! Fat! Fat! I am the personal.
Your world is you. I am my world.

You ten-foot poet among inchlings. Fat!
Begone! An inchling bristles in these pines,

Bristles, and points their Appalachian tangs,
And fears not portly Azcan nor his hoos.”

Elegance he attains in his fastidious vocabulary—in the surprising aplomb and blandness of his images. He will say "harmonium" instead of "small organ," "lacustrine" instead of "lakeside," "sequin" instead of "spangle"; he will speak of "hibiscus," "panache," "fabliau," and "poor buffo." The whole tendency of his vocabulary is, in fact, toward the lightness and coolness and transparency of French. As for his images, they are frequently surprising in themselves, yet they always produce the effect of naturalness—an effect which is cool, bland, transparent, natural, and gracefully mobile.

In the dandy of letters, impeccability is primarily achieved by adding elegance to correctness. Yet life is disturbing and horrifying as well as interesting and delightful: one is inevitably tossed by the "torments of confusion"; and the dandy, if he would maintain his urbane demeanour, must adopt protective measures. The safeguards employed by Mr Stevens against "the torments of confusion" are three: wit, speculation, and reticence. As an antidote to love-sick quandary, to the fear of decrepitude, to the disturbing vastness of the ocean, there is wit—that self-mockery which we have in *Le Monocle de Mon Oncle*, and *The Comedian As The Letter C*. Doubt of reality must be admitted as a purely speculative doubt, "as a calm darkens among water-lights." Let speculative doubt play gently across the surface of a steadfast materialism. And finally, let us be reticent, for reticence is becoming in its implication that one is aware of enigmatic miseries, and yet too proud to wear one's heart upon one's sleeve.

Mr Stevens possesses an imagination that is ordered. "Imagination," he says, "is the will of things." It is "the magnificent cause of being . . . the one reality in this imagined world." By its aid at least, one may invent a literary cosmos, moving according to calculations, subject to its own laws and hierarchies, consistent with itself, a minute but sustained harmony floating above the chaos of life. It is whole and understandable and therefore a refuge in a life that is fragmentary and perplexing. It, in being form, is a polite answer to the hugeness which we cannot form.

Upon what, may we ask, is this imaginative order of Wallace Stevens based? It is not humanism, for the humanist searches for unifying standards of general human experience. Needless to say, it is not religion, for the religious man strives for a knowledge of the absolute. It is discipline—the discipline of one who is a

connoisseur of the senses and the emotions. Mr Stevens' imagination comes to rest on them; it is at their service, it veils them in splendour. The integration achieved is one of feeling; in the final analysis, it is a temperate romanticism.

Wallace Stevens has a quality, however, which is rarely associated with romanticism, a quality that his illustrious predecessor, Baudelaire, lacked to complete his dandyism. Baudelaire's dandyism might be called a metallic shell secreted by a restless man against a despised shifting social order. It cannot be called a placid dandyism, whereas tranquillity enfolds Mr Stevens. This same lack of tranquillity impairs the dandyism of T. S. Eliot in those respects in which he is a dandy—turning his promenade through the alleged barrenness of modern life into bitter melancholy. Mr Stevens, however, appears to sit comfortably in the age, to enjoy a sense of security, to be conscious of no need of fighting the times. The world is a gay and bright phenomenon, and he gives the impression of feasting on it without misgiving. Here in Gubbinal is his answer to those who repine because the world is blasted and its people are miserable:

"That strange flower, the sun,
Is just what you say.
Have it your way.

The world is ugly,
And the people are sad.

That tuft of jungle feathers,
That animal eye,
Is just what you say.

That savage of fire,
That seed,
Have it your way.

The world is ugly,
And the people are sad."

Because of this tranquillity, this well-fed and well-booted dandyism of contentment, Mr Stevens has been called Chinese. Unde-

niably, he has been influenced by Chinese verse as he has been by French verse, but one must not force the comparison. For Chinese poetry as a whole rests upon great humanistic and religious traditions: its quiet strength and peace are often simply by-products of a profound understanding; its epicureanism is less an end, more a function, than the tranquillity—may I say—the decidedly American tranquillity of Wallace Stevens.

The American nation drives passionately toward comfort. The aim of the frenzied practical life in which it engages is to attain material ease, and the symbols of its paradise are significant. They are wide, accurately barbered lawns, white yachts with bright awnings, the silvered motor-car, the small regiment of obsequious servants. Naturally, in paradise one would not wish to be annoyed by a suspicion that all was a brilliant fake, a magnificent evanescent dream, but rather, to refine upon one's luxurious means of existence. This is where in America the artistic intelligence may enter and play, elaborating, colouring, bedecking, adding splendour to the circumstances of one's comfort. Is there not fundamentally a kinship between the sensory discriminations and comfortable tranquillity of Wallace Stevens' poetry and the America that owns baronial estates?

Growing more reckless, we might say that if Dr Jung is correct in asserting that in American psychology there is a unique alliance of wildness and restraint, then Wallace Stevens would seem in another respect to be at one with his country. I do not discover in him the ferocity that some critics have remarked upon, but there is at least a flair for bright savagery, for "that tuft of jungle feathers, that animal eye, that savage fire." In the case of certain romanticists, such symbols would betray insatiable longing, the desire for a nature that never existed. In his case, they are purely spectacular. The Old World Romantic, restless amid the stratifications of his culture, yearns for the untamed: the New World Romantic assumes the easy posture of an audience.

American readers may well rejoice in this artist who is so gifted in depicting sea-surfaces full of clouds. No American poet excels him in the sensory delights that a spick-and-span craft can stimulate: none is more skilful in arranging his music, his figures, and his design. None else, monocled and gloved, can cut so faultless a figure standing in his box at the circus of life.

There are masters of art and art-masters. Seldom has an artist been more canny and more definite in distinguishing between major and minor than Wallace Stevens. No one has more carefully observed to the letter the restrictions of the art-master, or more perfectly exemplified to us the virtue of impeccable form.

LULLABY FOR A TIRED LADY

BY ROBERT L. WOLF

Is there any need so deep?
Sleep, I think, only sleep.

Only sleep and music move
Bosoms travel-stained with love.

Only they relax the brow,
Weary now, weary now—

Wash in even rhythms—flow
Over Time's "I told you so,"

While the pageant past becomes
So much noise of dying drums,

Like the rumble of a storm—
Distant, sober, uniform.

BOOK REVIEWS

AN ADHERENT OF THE ACTUAL

MEMOIR OF THOMAS BEWICK. *Written by Himself.*
Introduction by Selwyn Image. 8vo. 274 pages.
Lincoln MacVeagh. The Dial Press. \$4.

THE reader of Thomas Bewick's story of himself will be impressed with a certain justice of mind in the writer, and an easy and mature originality in his narrative. The reason may lie in the fact that this excellent writing was the occupation of his leisure, as he was six years in composing what a modern novelist, so far as length goes, would readily produce in six weeks. Or it may be because his faculties had put on a last ripeness by the time he began to write, which was in 1822, his sixty-ninth year; so that the effect is that of an old man, once active, but now quietly and brightly ruminating in the chimney corner. An Indian-summer air is in his pages, and their tranquillity takes nothing away, but rather sets off this unconscious picture of stoutness of character, and energy of parts—the picture of a man who was warmly a man, an artist who took his art (wood-engraving) simply, but with a certain enjoying seriousness.

But one has not long to read to discover that the effect is not so readily accountable; that there is something not ordinary about him. Yet the narrative is not particularly stirring, although the times were unquiet enough, for he lived through the years that saw the coming and going of the "American War," the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic empire. The perception arrives with perhaps a shade of surprise that a great part of his effect lives in his modesty. We learn that, in his artistic attainments, he was almost wholly self-taught, for he never had a drawing master, he tells us, or even lessons in drawing. But among self-taught men, one with his evident sense of what would be appropriate in his bearing, is remarkable indeed. It seemed that he knew unusually well, where his place was in the world; and without ostentation,

but firmly, and self-respectingly, kept his solid legs planted there.

From this stout vantage-point he turned an intent eye upon his world. It was evidently with active thinking and the greatest seriousness that he turned over in his mind everything he saw, everything that came across his path. Yet he was far from solemn, though perhaps the shy rustic in him straightened his face a little, and somewhat abashed his edged and robust humour, for when it appears, as in his vignettes of country life, it is surprisingly, though with the effect of having been there unnoticed all the while, like Cyrano in the famous opening scene of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. He was, in fact, of bounding spirit, with a stomach for living. He did not overflow with love—it was his study to be contained; but he was really and rarely filled with it: the love of nature, the love of life, the love of men. He had sometimes—oddly for him—the effect of a visionary, so imbued was he with genuine humanitarian sentiment, and schemes for the public welfare and comity.

But after all the reader will readily remark that he was not a doting lover. He had an entrenched habit of taking observations, and seemed, like other minds of strength and symmetry, not to lose his awareness of where the north star lies. Such sense of mental directions was perhaps derivative, as were possibly his other qualities, from his evident master virtue, which was an invincible habit of trying to see through things as they are apparently, or as they are generally accepted to be, to things as they are actually. It is not enough, he tells you, in effect, with his tranquil and manly air, that a thing should be generally accepted; for the world is made of men, knaves, and fools. And a thing may pass for being generally accepted, when it is only accepted by fools and interested knaves. A man, therefore, he considers, must strictly establish for himself the grounds of his every belief, must strictly satisfy himself as to actuality of premise in his every mental structure, acquired or evolved. Thus the reader will find that he could be full of reverence, and of searching, at the same time—and also full of perspicacity.

His zeal for the actual was equalled only by the satisfaction he took when he succeeded in setting his thinking and feeling parallel to it. And in this practised activity of his mind seem to reside not only the sinews of his honest sense, but the means, or

the expression, of his artistic powers. Commentators remark the truth of his line and shade to the deeply humorous or pathetic meanings in his art, as something rather apart, which separately had the effect of elevating the rusticity of country scenes. Such a trait seems, however, to be organically the product of the choice observation, and the fidelity to significant fact, which arise directly from a love of the subject, from the thought that its remarkability deserves the artist's best vision. He himself speaks with some unconscious illumination of this characteristic, when he mentions the dissatisfaction he experienced when obliged to sketch some of his studies for the *British Birds* from stuffed specimens, and how he promptly discarded such studies when he was so situated that he could make others more accurate of life. Or take him at another matter, the profession of painting:

"Had I been a painter, I never would have copied the works of the 'old masters,' however highly they might be esteemed. I would have gone to nature for all my patterns."

This, evidently, he did, so far as he could, in his engraving; and one would think it an important factor of his eminence in the art, though that is said to rest to a considerable extent on his technical development of the so-called white line.

But his zeal for the actual is more than an axiom of art. He made it, as one might judge, not only his chief principle of thinking, but the thing he most lived by; and that he lived solidly, and with a sincerity which is true bullion, no one will be disposed to deny who gives the tranquil manliness of his book the attention it will repay. The mental fruits of this bias of his, give him in some respects a modern air, though he is rather too pleasant to be called a realist. He antedated sociology in the suggestions he recorded for the regenerative treatment of criminals; this at a time when plain blunt brutality was largely the mode. And—what must have sounded odd in the ears of his contemporaries, so long used to stuffiness and an impressionistic hygiene—he held that fresh air and a rigorous personal regimen were the only sound basis of hardihood and wholesome energy. He had the boldness, even, to recommend (and the last third of his advice still blooms with largely unheeded originality) to great and lesser ladies that

they leave off being "mewed up in close rooms," live in the open, and become practical florists and horticulturalists.

But perhaps his application to the actual is better shown in the fact that while full of religious feeling, he was scornful of creed; or in his view, temperately expounded, but too long for quotation, of biblical fables not as literal, utter truth, but as allegories, pabulum for simple and puerile understandings, used with some deliberateness, by Moses and the other great biblical rulers, as governing and teaching devices, for the restraint and upbringing of their peoples.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

SOCIAL EARTH

NEW HAMPSHIRE: A Poem With Notes and Grace Notes. By Robert Frost. With woodcuts by J. J. Lankes. 12mo. 113 pages. Henry Holt and Company. \$2.50.

IN this volume Mr Frost's humour is at once more pungent and more adumbrative than ever. The title-poem is exceptionally racy. At first it might seem exceptionally explicit, as though the poet had here determined to unsheathe his views on American life. But soon we find New Hampshire is mere introduction—a tangy series of adumbrative instances, bunches of sweetfern at the edge of a field to tempt the trampler inward. The true odour of the field is not sharp and referable, but composite and pervasive. It comes only to the patient stroller-through who breathes naturally, without plucking and snuffing.

Mr Frost is so close to earth, and earth is for him so social, that vehement love and fear of it seem to him out of focus.

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep;
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep . . ."

He tosses half of a laugh at a certain "runaway from nature" for whom "the wood's in flux"—

"He knew too well for any earthly use
The line where man leaves off and nature starts,
And never over-stepped it save in dreams"—

and the other half at "the new school of the pseudo-phallic, mewling and puking in the public arms." He points comically toward the real-phallic in *Two Look at Two*, where, over a broken wall on a mountainside, a pair of human lovers come face to face with a buck and doe, each couple looking questions at the other. He notes how commercialism is loosening our American hold of the

soil. He can't be fully at ease with a boyhood friend who had grown so rich that "His farm was 'grounds' and not a farm at all"; and a certain brook smothered by a city becomes for him a feverish human symbol. He loves New Hampshire (a state of mind rather than a state) for all the things she doesn't sell. He gives to her wild grapes a poem reminiscent of *Birches* in *Mountain Interval*; and remarks, with casual wild loveliness, that

"Her unpruned grapes are flung like lariats
Far up the birches out of reach of man."

In summers he wants her mountain-tops higher,

"To tap the upper sky and draw a flow
Of frosty night air on the vale below."

Winter, indeed, spreads through this book, with fringes of chill spring and late autumn. On the other hand the poet rejects (page 12) the kind of gloom that so many realists are aiming at nowadays, and sets over against it "the need of being versed in country things": "For them there is really nothing sad." He cultivates cold and meagre soil, not to get a dark emotion out of it, but from a humorous-creative delight in whatever can manage to live there. His birds, for instance, neither assemble in lovely chanting groves, as of old, nor warble in bleak solitude like Hardy's thrush "upon the growing gloom." They gather quite naturally on a muddy road when a snowstorm has driven them from every other foothold. For the ordinary person nothing can be less inspiring than the heavy snowstorm that brings winter back upon the middle spring of New England, breaking branches and checking shoots that are late enough already: it seems the very distillation of all that is aimless in life. This time, however,

"The road became a channel running flocks
Of glossy birds like ripples over rocks . . .
Well, something for the snowstorm to have shown
The country's singing strength thus brought together,
That though repressed and moody with the weather
Was none the less there ready to be freed
And sing the wildflowers up from root and seed."

Yet the reader who finds a deliberate cheerfulness in *Our Singing Strength* is as far from the Frostian humour as when he finds deliberate depression in *Place for a Third*. The neighbourhood in this poem¹ is indeed a drab "product of life's ironing-out." Here death seems life's main interest—if one is looking at New England life from the viewpoint, for instance, of Miss Amy Lowell's *Overgrown Pasture*. The community seems mainly interested in getting itself decently buried; its dutifulness and economy are ironically exercised together in the question of proper graves and grief. But, catching aright the humour of the poem, one soon sees that Laban's procedure in regard to his dead wife is more convincingly romantic than bereaved Romeo's. The whole blank neighbourhood wins a real stir of poetic life from its "glimpse of lingering person in Eliza." This glimpse (which the poet might well have developed a little more fully) broadens down into the region of rich social humour, between laughter and sadness, from which Mr Frost's "singing strength" comes. More intense and closely woven than this poem are *The Census-taker* and *The Witch of Coös*, which seem to me the masterpieces, for art, in this volume.

G. R. ELLIOTT

¹ It recalls to my memory a gaunt and patched Maine farmer whom I once stopped to talk with beside the road. When I tried to find out what leisure time he had and what he did with it, he pointed with interest to the family graveplot on a nearby slope (the least unkempt spot on the farm that a passerby could see) and said: "I shan't get rest worth speakin' of till I'll lie up yonder."

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AN ILLUSTRIOUS DOCTOR ADMIRABLE FOR EVERYTHING

HISTORIA CALAMITATUM: An Autobiography. By
Peter Abélard. Translated by Henry Adams Bellows.
With introduction by Ralph Adams Cram. 8vo. 96
pages. Thomas A. Boyd. \$10.

THOSE who find modern autobiographic fiction disenchanting and unreal, may acclaim perfection in Henry Adams Bellows' recent translation of Abélard's autobiographic letter, *The Story of My Misfortunes*. Not everyone, however, has agreed with John of Salisbury that Abélard was "an illustrious doctor admirable for everything." In his *Historical Sketches*, Cardinal Newman observes: "Supposing Abélard to be the first master of scholastic philosophy, as many seem to hold, we shall have still no difficulty in condemning the author, while we honour the work." "Abélard was not a great character," says Henry Osborn Taylor, "apart from his intellect. He was vain and inconsiderate, a man who delighted in confounding and supplanting his teachers, and in being a thorn in the flesh of all opponents." Ralph Adams Cram, furthermore, in introducing *The Story of My Misfortunes*, says with temerarious fluency, "We know that during his early years in Paris Abélard was a bold and daring champion in the lists of dialectics; brilliant, persuasive, masculine to a degree; yet this self-portrait is of a man timid, suspicious, frightened of realities," and Dr Maurice De Wulf speaks of him as "challenging all and sundry to philosophical controversies in which he always boasted of victory in advance." In the statement, "I pitched the camp of my school outside the city," it is obvious that the wisdom suggested is "gladiatorial wisdom," nor does one doubt the appropriateness of the assertion that Abélard was, when confronted by the tribunal who accused him of heretical belief in three separate gods, as "a bound wild rhinoceros." But why not? Under such circumstances, surely it is inevitable that one's "natural promptness" should assert itself, rather than the gentleman's talent of

"not offending." In an age of "savants' cockfights," when men "preferred new and hazardous doctrines to those that were truer, but appeared superannuated," and "scorned what seemed too clear"; when it was said by a disgusted contemporary that the subtleties of dialectics were "like a fine and minute dust blinding the eyes of those who stir it up," Abélard's clear vigour separates itself from the manner of the times, and nicely florescent writers might well refresh their faculties in an examination of his pliant, severely careful methods.

We have in the *Historia Calamitatum*, throughout, the naturalness of the literary genius with a native orderliness and an enticing gift of subordination and emphasis, which in combination would seem to constitute the essence of good story-telling; the instinct for method which is the animating principle of suspense, being especially conspicuous in such statements as the following:

"First I was punished for my sensuality, and then for my pride; . . . now it is my desire that you should know the stories of these two happenings . . . the very facts . . . and the order in which they came about."

Although Abélard is said to have been "greatly in love with his own discernment," and innate humility is not to be observed in the statement, "It was my wont to win success, not by routine but by ability," the manner of the *Historia* is striking in its utter simplicity with a kind of laconic despair—whether combined with arrogance or pruned of it. Of the sentimental preoccupation which insulated him from philosophical research, he wearily remarks:

"It became loathsome to me to go to the school or to linger there. . . . I had become nothing more than a reciter of my former discoveries,"

and although he had said of William of Champeaux,

"the more his envy pursued me, the greater was the authority it conferred upon me. Even so held the poet, 'Jealousy aims at the peaks,'"

he repudiates his own hauteur, observing:

"But prosperity puffs up the foolish. . . . Thus, I, who by this time had come to regard myself as the only philosopher remaining in the whole world, . . . I departed alike from the practice of the philosophers and the spirit of the divines,"

and says of his failure to inculcate sobriety in the monks of St Gildas:

"I considered how of old I had been of some service to the clerics whom I had now abandoned for the sake of these monks, so that I was no longer able to be of use to either; how incapable I had proved myself in everything I had undertaken or attempted, so that above all others I deserved the reproach, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.'"

Abélard was not perhaps, "the first philosopher of his time," in the body of thought which he bequeathed to us, but his methods "emancipated reason by giving it confidence in its own forces," and although a boast of priority is self-adulatory no doubt, one values the intelligence of the critic who remarks in quoting what Abélard so unselfprotectively said of himself, "If he was wrong to say it, perhaps he was right in thinking it."

The arresting combination of explicitness with aloofness emphasizes in the *Historia Calamitatum*, the contrast in literary skill between the mawkish accounts by untalented writers, of the author's relationship with Héloïse, and his own magisterial candour. The *Story of My Misfortunes*, far from being as one might infer from allusions to it, *The Story of My Misfortune*—the mere record of a sentimental tragedy—is rather, a many-angled record of a life of multiform hardship.

For the "peevishness" to which Mr Cram refers in the introduction to this letter, one looks in vain. We do perceive a desperate melancholy in the statement:

"The only way of escape seemed for me to seek refuge with Christ among the enemies of Christ."

Abélard speaks of being "horrificed," "stunned by fear," but does it not at all fearfully; it is suffering rather than fear that is emphasized when he says:

"I am driven hither and yon, a fugitive and a vagabond even as the accursed Cain. . . . 'Without were fightings, within were fears,' "

and

"amid the dreadful roar of the waves of the sea, where the land's end left me no further refuge in flight, I was like one who in terror of the sword that threatens him dashes headlong over a precipice, and to shun one death for a moment rushes to another."

In writing this letter as a specific for another's despair—of whose we cannot be sure—Abélard has bequeathed to us a master-stroke of sensibility and understanding. He has narrated simply, with many graces of exactness, the particulars of his experience and he has done it with incomparable éclat.

MARIANNE MOORE

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CODIFYING MILTON

MILTON, MAN AND THINKER. By Denis Saurat.
8vo. 363 pages. Lincoln MacVeagh. The Dial
Press. \$4.

MR SAURAT'S book on Milton, despite the total orthodoxy of its treatment, is a very difficult work to approach. On first reading I felt it to be an assembling of *disjecta membra*; yet further examination disclosed that the subject had been parcelled out with perfect logic and clarity. The opening section is devoted to Milton, The Man. It is in turn sub-divided into The Elements of Milton's Character in Youth, and The Man of Action and Passion, the latter sub-division astutely including the polemical pamphlets as a phase of Milton's "action." The other three parts—again sub-divided, while the sub-divisions are sub-divided in turn—deal respectively with Milton's "system," the reflection (and occasionally deflection) of this system in his major poems, and the "sources" of his thought. Having gone so far in the laying out of his book, I suspect Mr Saurat of simply reversing his process, taking the various notes which he had collected and sorting them into their proper bins. The result is too often a mere sequence of data, a loose mosaic of quotations paralleled by repetitions in Mr Saurat's own words, or introduced by some such barely serviceable remarks as: "And he concludes in this masterly fashion"; "The praise of books is famous"; "Here is his opinion of contemporary Italy"; "But here is his opinion of England." The work, which originally served as a doctor's thesis, has not wholly lifted itself above its type.

In his introduction Mr Saurat writes that "Milton's thought is most attractive when studied in connection with its intimate sources in his character and emotional experience." One might begin by challenging this statement in itself. Indeed, Mr Saurat's own book may be taken as added evidence that Milton's thought is, on the contrary, most attractive when it is left embedded and obscured among Milton's own stylistic specifications. A poet's "thoughts" are not those flat answers to questionnaires which can

be extracted, in the form of propositions, from some intricate piece of rhetoric constructed around these "thoughts." Ibsen's "thoughts" on the freedom of women, for instance, are not certain sentences taken from his *Doll's House*. His thoughts on this subject *are* the *Doll's House*. The "thoughts" on the subject—as Mr Saurat understands the word—are, like the thoughts of Milton which Mr Saurat so carefully outlines, perfectly capable of suggesting themselves to persons of rich or low vitality, and to powerful and niggardly brains alike.

But even allowing Mr Saurat his assumption, I feel that his book still remains a disappointment. For he possesses only the most antiquated and unwieldy of mechanisms for disclosing to us the "intimate sources" in Milton's "character and emotional experience." In view of the increasing accuracy of psychological nomenclature during recent years, the reader will be nonplussed at a method of investigation which confines itself to talk of "imperious will," "penetrating and systematic intellect," "fullest self-consciousness of a tremendous individuality," "noble humility in his pride." Mr Saurat tends always to discuss Milton's character in an ethical, rather than a psychological, vocabulary.

A similar objection might be made to Mr Saurat's treatment of theology in Milton. He does hardly more than cull or rearrange Milton's theological prose, and—by seeing it purely in the terms current in its heyday—restates rather than interprets. (He does, however, draw certain parallels between Milton's system and that of some nineteenth-century philosophy.) As to his appendix on Milton's blindness, and his somewhat loose yet possibly correct reasoning to prove that it derived from hereditary syphilis, this is a fact which—if thoroughly established—might be useful to those savants who keep turning up with the desire to connect genius with disease. In Mr Saurat's volume it is merely constated, a thesis without an application, left *in vacuo*.

In summary I should say that Mr Saurat's concerns are decidedly peripheral to those aspects of Milton's poetry which recommend it to modern readers; but in this peripheral territory his work has been extensive, and should prove of most value to students and producing scholars, all those for whom Milton is less a poet than a task.

KENNETH BURKE

BRIEFER MENTION

GEORGIAN STORIES, 1925 (illus., 12mo, 339 pages; Putnam: \$2.50). This volume, the third in the series, is notable for the inclusion of a story by F. Tennyson Jesse. Miss Jesse's story, *Baker's Fury*, is directly in the tradition of Thomas Hardy. It displays a vigorous originality, a rugged strength of narrative, an intimate knowledge of the values of pity and terror. The *Little Mexican*, a reminiscence by Aldous Huxley, is written with considerable charm, and freedom from that artificiality which is the calculated grace of Osbert Sitwell's *The Greeting*. To Americans it might be of interest to trace the relation between L. P. Hartley's *The Island* and Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. It may be said in general that the writers of the various stories that make up the present volume are capable in manipulating the formal elements of the short story.

ST. MAWR, by D. H. Lawrence (12mo, 222 pages; Knopf: \$2). Like the stallion about which this story is concerned, Mr Lawrence stamps, and snorts, and tosses his mane with unbridled spirit. If one had not read him before, one would be startled into thought by his vehement sincerity, alienated by a vulgar superficiality in his depicting of character, and led on from page to page by such poetic phrases as "the hawks sat motionless like dark fists clenched under heaven." But all Mr Lawrence's later work trumpets out in changing cadences the same injunction, an injunction which one finds more artistically expressed in *The Fox*, or even in *The Lost Girl*, than in the present somewhat headlong exposition.

MOON HARVEST, by Guiseppe Cautela (12mo, 253 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2) might be as vulnerable as a watch in the hands of a curious schoolboy, if one chose to take its story apart to discover what makes it tick, yet there is something in the ingenuous sincerity with which it is composed which arrests one's impulse. The author writes with an artless ardour which is a grace in itself; the thought flows quietly and the climax comes as though it were unavoidable rather than something sought after and contrived. The simple tragedy of two Italian immigrants, separated by the tide of American life which catches one up while it leaves the other behind, is set down imaginatively, and—what is even more important—understandingly.

THE MOTHER'S RECOMPENSE, by Edith Wharton (12mo, 342 pages; Appleton: \$2) is written with the indulgent perceptive irony of a refined woman of the world whose insight remains pure and light and whose intellect carries with perfect ease its somewhat familiar burden. The respect one continues to feel for Mrs Wharton's lucidity and skill can no longer compensate one, however, for a certain quality of thinness increasingly evident in each of her successive volumes.

THAT NICE YOUNG COUPLE, by Francis Hackett (12mo, 383 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2) is sharp and ironic—a novel built up analytically rather than creatively. Armed with a geologist's hammer, Mr Hackett has scaled the rocky mountain of middle-class Puritanism, and chipped off a specimen for laboratory study. Having set out to show the break-down in a conventional marriage, he plays no favourites; the novel gives off no warmth and only a pale cold light. If the marriage which Mr Hackett has chosen for his experiment were a little less fossilized to start with, the flounderings and the ultimate futility in the relationship of his nice young couple would be of deeper import. As it stands, the author seems to hold his characters off in one direction and his reader off in another; his detachment is perhaps too thoroughly insulated.

GOLD BY GOLD, by Herbert S. Gorman (12mo, 380 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50) Mr James Joyce achieves, at the hands of his first American biographer, his first American novel. The title indicates that the indebtedness is acknowledged, but the novel does not prove that the methods of Mr Joyce are either inevitable or desirable in the particular instance. The same sensibility, the same erudition, and the same intellectual discipline (control of the form) are required in the writer who adopts all of the Joycean methods and most of the tricks. Mr Gorman's sensibility is, indeed, extraordinary, but he has not been successful in making a third-rate poet, his hero, the medium of expression as Joyce was successful in making the uncommon-common mind of Bloom his medium. The story of this poet of small talents who aspires to and imitates the life of a genius, and is broken by it, is not exceptionally interesting as narrative; an unreal marriage at the beginning of the hero's career takes the edge off the far more interesting relations into which he later enters, the women being much more delicately and skilfully rendered than the men. There is an exceptional intensity in the book, but it is not always focused, and the creative vigour which would have taken this novel out of the field of imitation is lacking. The honest, sound intelligence, the excellence of nearly all the secondary qualities, make it all the more certain that tribute to even the greatest of novelists had best be done in one's own manner, for this would be a better novel if Joyce had written it or if Mr Gorman had never read Joyce.

FISHMONGER'S FIDDLE, Tales by A. E. Coppard (12mo, 320 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). One's admiration for the light reflective touch, the often delicate and accurate observation of country types and scenes of this somewhat waggish Englishman is constantly retarded in the present collection of short stories by expressions such as "his healthy shaven face looked as if he washed in tomato soup," or "he was a widower, contemplating a new marriage to a spinster who had five thousand pounds and a moustache." Mr Coppard has a slippery and accomplished intelligence which comes to rest too easily on the surface things of life. Those fortunate occasions, however, when he penetrates this surface, lead one to hope that the facile winks and jests in which he often indulges, are not wholly native to his talent and may in time disappear.

SONGS & POEMS, by Henry Carey, decorations by Robert Gibbings (8vo, 64 pages; printed at the Golden Cockerel Press: \$5). Verses from Carey's plays were assembled in *Poems on Several Occasions*, a volume issued in 1713 and twice revised during the twenty years which followed. In 1740, three years before his death, he published a *Musical Century* of 100 English Ballads. The present volume is composed of selections from these almost forgotten sources. It is printed beautifully, contains the music to many of the songs, and woodcuts which are only a shade too quaint. As for the poems themselves, they have been too long neglected. They are straightforward, graceful, and will prove the delight of any one who prefers the real eighteenth century to the concoction of moonlight and desire rendered so popular by the imitators of Verlaine.

THE THIRTEENTH CAESAR, and Other Poems, by Sacheverell Sitwell (8vo, 112 pages; Doran: \$2). Archaic treatment of the modern is deftly balanced by modern treatment of the archaic in these aesthetically intent, precipitate, by no means "easy" poems. Although impact and clarity are sometimes sacrificed to opulence of method and of content, the reader is obdurate who can resist the charm—in this cosmography of Mr Sitwell's—of the "salamander, safe and breathing," the snow "sliding slow," "turtle shell" and "pearls," "the music of the waves' glass bodies" "the sapling grace and symmetry" of Greek statuary, "swans working with their webbed oars," and "dockyards full of boats a-building."

TABLE-TALK OF G.B.S., Conversations on Things in General between George Bernard Shaw and his Biographer, Archibald Henderson (12mo, 162 pages, Harper: \$2). The really noticeable quality of Mr Shaw's talk is its flippancy. It seems quite as light as the dialogues in the novels of the popular Mr Michael Arlen! There is an occasional amusing sally and at long intervals, bits of sense, but the effect of the whole is cheap. The thinnest portion of the book is Mr Shaw's defence of his conduct during the war. At this late date, it appears that G.B.S. was both agin the government and for it—a socialistic Vicar of Brae.

From the title of *STUDIES FROM TEN LITERATURES*, by Ernest Boyd (12mo, 317 pages; Scribner: \$3) the words "no less than" were, it seems, omitted before the numeral. The book is informative, but information, in Mr Boyd's work, is not always illuminating. His study of Flaubert and French Realism is excellent; it defines terms and gives character to literary movements; but a great many of the studies are only book reviews (d'Annunzio, *les Tharaud*) and some seem to be several book reviews rolled into one, so that trivial facts are repeated in the same essay and even on successive pages (147 and 148). The slurs at unimportant people (138) and at important ones on unimportant matters (Eliot's French) which were appropriate enough in newspapers, are regrettable, because generally unrelated here. A following volume, *Studies From Nine Literatures*, is announced. By continuing the descending scale, Mr Boyd may give us, at least, a study in one, a, or no literature, which would be interesting.

NEWMAN AS A MAN OF LETTERS, by Joseph J. Reilly (12mo, 329 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). Mr Reilly is far too worshipful to criticize the literary eminence of the great Cardinal. His aesthetic appraisals consist mainly of extravagant tributes, eloquent comparisons, and prolonged enthusiasms. We learn, for instance, that Newman is a greater man than Donne, that his *Apologia* is the third great autobiography, the other two being the *Confessions* of St Augustine and Rousseau, and that he is the literary brother of Carlyle and Browning. And we are told that "Newman's chief endowment as a man of letters was threefold: a mastery of rhetoric, a perfect style and psychological insight," but of penetrating analysis there is little. The book, however, gives an intelligent and absorbing account of the Cardinal's spiritual struggles, and is characterized throughout by tolerance and the absence of sectarian bigotry.

BENJAMIN CONSTANT, His Private Life and His Contribution to the Cause of Liberal Government in France, 1767-1830, by Elizabeth Schermerhorn (illus., 8vo., 424 pages; Houghton, Mifflin: \$5). An immensely detailed study which, though readable and even entertaining, does not, upon the whole, provide a very living portrait. There is a curious miscarriage of effect in it, in which the authoress's hero, Benjamin, appears pallid, and her villain, Mme de Staël, real enough. Mme de Staël dominates the situation as she so often did in life and in spite of Miss Schermerhorn's best efforts to subdue her. The ineffectiveness of Benjamin is due to the too lengthy consideration of his callow youth. Three-fourths preparation and one-fourth career is an error in proportion—in this case, at least.

THE SCHOOL FOR AMBASSADORS and Other Essays, by J. J. Jusserand (12mo, 341 pages; Putnam: \$3.50). One could be facetious, if it were worth while, with M Jusserand's diplomacy. He admits delicately but distinctly that in the past diplomacy has been founded upon lies and over-reaching, but insists nevertheless that the calling is honourable. He sees what is called "open-diplomacy" looming up in the future, and says truth in the end prevails, which it does undoubtedly, when no longer in the way of business. As a scholar he has, naturally, a freer hand. His meditations at the tomb of Petrarch, his analyses of Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, and Chaucer, show a firm grasp upon the mediaeval point of view; and provide agreeable stimuli for the modern student.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS OF HENRY THE EIGHTH, edited by and with preface by Francis Macnamara (8vo, 244 pages; Golden Cockerel Press: \$7.50). Fastidiously printed, with an ingeniously irrelevant preface, with modernized spelling and in some instances, modernized grammar, these writings confirm one's suspicion that The Defender of the Faith or "Henry the hunter" as he styles himself, was, if a man of letters, essentially a man of love letters. Green Groweth the Holly and Song VII—"whoso loveth should love but one"—are perhaps with the letters to Anne Boleyn, Henry the Eighth's most "congruous" and royal writings.

THE THEATRE

AFTER five seasons as commentator on the theatre for **THE DIAL** I am encouraged to continue by what I vaguely think is a growing intelligence of theatrical matters. I seem, on occasions and to myself, to know what I am talking about; whether this gratifying sensation is shared by any one else, I cannot be sure.

I am aware of having been confused and having caused confusion, largely because it is tiresome always to repeat simple and essential things. The theatre does not appear in my mind as a unit; there are several theatres, and the highest praise of one is not nearly so rich a commendation as a moderately adverse report on another—the best of the Shubert revues will still rank a little below a competent production of *Medea*. This hierarchy of merit is based not so much on intensity of pleasure, as on the quality of pleasure; and the sources of our satisfactions are various.

I derive a vast satisfaction out of the average commercial theatre, when a few conditions are met. It is a deplorable thing for our notions of solemnity that competence can be shown as swiftly in a farce as in a tragedy; George M. Cohan's mastery of his instrument is as complete as Ibsen's of his. To over-appreciate this mastery, to care nothing for the application of it, is almost a moral fault; it certainly is intellectually as weak as not seeing that the mastery itself is a desirable quality.

The highest degree of competence on the American stage is generally associated with the lighter forms of entertainment. (It is, by the way, extraordinary that the movies do not share in this, but boggle their material and use their technical effects like amateurs.) What happens to a fairly steady patron of the theatre is, that he sees ten musical shows and farce-comedies and revues, all produced with infinite care, so that everything clicks. He sees half a dozen light comedies in which, within the limitations of the subject, the author has thought his matter out completely. And then he goes to a serious play and finds the author and the producer far below the required level. His memory of mastery in the other fields inevitably compels a slightly unfavourable reaction. He knows that the problem is far harder, but he cannot help

wondering why the good things should not be as well done as the trivial.

A few years of complete minor pleasures and interrupted major satisfaction will produce an intellectual doubt. Can the theatre, dependent upon such awkward interpreters as human beings, convey such exaltation as words or marble or, to the initiated, mathematical relations? A few years ago I was well on the way to believing that the answer is no. I find, to my surprise, that I now think the answer may be yes. Assurance is still lacking.

What I am sure of is that a considerable amount of fundamental brain work will have to be added to a powerful poetic imagination before the great theatre is created. (I am thinking now of the producer, not of the author.) This brain work will be applied first of all to an enquiry into the nature of style. In the exalted and in the frivolous theatres both, the prime defect is an ignorance, or a lack of taste, which brings us an operetta produced as a revue (*THE MIKADO*, last year) or a tragi-comedy produced as a tragedy (all the *Wild Ducks* before the revival last year). In general the light theatre has the easier time and makes the fewer mistakes, because the classifications are broad and the nuances few. How to get over the sentiment of *THE SONG AND DANCE MAN* was a minor problem in comparison with the task of creating from the chaos of incidents in *HE WHO GETS SLAPPED* the precise quality of awe and pity and terror and madness which the play had in it to give.

It is obvious that if a director knows exactly what a play is, he will make a better production than if he suspects that it is roughly a comedy or a tragedy. A director of genius will be able to read a manuscript and "all gloriously soar" without bothering his head about the category into which the play falls, and trusting to his instinct to make everything right. For all except the genius, the work of sorting, classifying, searching for the proper category, is really the work of studying the internal nature of the play, and of finding the proper style and tone for its production. The category should be used as the instrument of discovery—as it originally was in the minds of good critics. It is not a pigeon-hole; it is a test of quality. When the director can identify a play—that is, can comprehend its significance—he may usefully forget under what name it is ticketed, if he will only remember to produce it in the style its nature requires.

The zealot of the great theatre tends to forget that we have on the contemporary stage two separate developments, from almost entirely separate sources. There is the serious theatre developed out of the religious drama (Greek or Miracle Play) and the light theatre developed out of the make-up box (the *commedia dell' arte*, according to Dr Winifred Smith). This second theatre is the theatre of technique; it is the player's theatre as the other is the playwright's; it does not deal in ideas, and it does not try to exalt, but to divert. From it we get, if not genealogically, at least in a spiritual descent, our vaudeville, and vaudeville to-day penetrates into all the other forms of light entertainment. As in the Italian professional comedy, there is improvisation in vaudeville; I have heard Joe Cook outline a brief scene to his company and then watched the scene being made up on the stage in accordance with the general scenario and leading up to the resumption of the text. This whole theatre, divorced from emotion and almost free of intellectual content, is supremely satisfactory in its form; it has a grease-paint technique which often is superb. It is pure theatre and depends for its success on its theatrical value, not on the presentation of acceptable or startling ideas. That is why it is so interesting aesthetically.

My devotion to the vaudeville side of the theatre has made me a little ungrateful to high and noble thoughts in the drama, because the vaudeville side has taught me to dissect plays a little and to be interested in them as works of art, and not as vehicles for ideas. Separate the ancient theme of *THE MIRACLE* from the way it was presented, and you have left a mass of aesthetic faults with only a few redeeming virtues; separate the ideas from the manner in *THE WILD DUCK* and you have a self-justifying aesthetic remainder, you are aware of a form which precisely allows the ideas to develop, and which does not strain them beyond nature. What Ibsen has passionately to say about human life, and especially about human relations, is to me more interesting and important than certain philosophical ideas about truth, and certain scientific ideas about heredity, which he uses as the framework exactly as he uses his plots as framework. The charge and surcharge of emotion he effects by being an artist in the theatre; and fails rather dismally when the artist yields to the thinker. Or, to take the most difficult example, Bernard Shaw. A technique

which always accomplishes the impossible is joined to a wit which surprises us out of any preconceptions about the theatre; he does present hundreds of ideas, about economics and politics and health, and almost everything which ought to be uninteresting on the stage. Rarely, as in *HEARTBREAK HOUSE*, he is an artist; but always he has such a mastery of the dramatic and melodramatic elements, that he succeeds. His wit and his religion survive his politics (as in *CANDIDA*); his wit and his melodrama survive his ideas (as in *ARMS AND THE MAN*).

Regrettably, one can theorize for ever about the theatre. It must be clear by this time that I have not seen a play in five months. As *THE DIAL* goes to press before my return to New York, I have unfairly set forth these general ideas, but I cannot delude myself into believing that they take the place of an acute comment on *THE GREEN HAT*. But I have missed more than plays by my absence. From Mr Woolcott's entertaining comments in the *New York World* I learn that my fellow second-nighter, Mr John Farrar, has on two occasions risen from his seat in the theatre and protested against the goings-on to which he was a witness. Once he protested against a travesty of "Now I lay me down to sleep" and once to the remarks of a hard-boiled Captain of Marines concerning the use of a college degree at the front. Of the first case I know nothing and solemnly affirm that the lyric prayer holds no sentimental interest for me. But the second is, again, a matter of aesthetics. If the ideas of Captain Flag in *WHAT PRICE GLORY* are morally offensive, that is one thing. But consider the aesthetic offence if he had without irony said to the college youths, "Your training in philosophy and economics and football will be of invaluable service here; I trust you are both Phi Beta Kappa men." I am reminded of an incident in which two of our prominent young actresses figured. It occurred at the first performance given here by the late Eleanora Duse. As Duse entered on the scene (forgive me if I mention the obvious, she entered in character, as Ellida Wrangel) one of the young women (imitated instantly by her companion, a writer for the theatre) rose and stood in the aisle, as a symbol of her veneration. The other actress, sitting close by, said with a sharp opening hiss, "Sit down, you damned fool." Aesthetics, as I have suggested, have their place in the theatre as well as in real life.

GILBERT SELDES

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MUSICAL CHRONICLE

WHEN the opportunity was offered me of returning, murdererwise, to the scene of so many of my crimes, the musical appetite was unusually spry, and the discovery there was no two-hand literature about, a sharp disappointment. The volumes in the cabinet of the friends who had graciously loaned me their piano for an afternoon, called relentlessly for the duet of violin and piano. I dare say my friends believed I played by heart, I who have never been able to visualize a phrase. Fortunately, I remembered having come upon a score of *Tannhäuser* in the attic; fetched it without much enthusiasm; and, turning the pages of the old volume, began with the stringed passage in the second act which follows immediately upon the triumphal entry of the Hofbräu guests. As I played, my delight at the recovery of something as good as the lyrical page growing with each bar, a curious realization came to me. (Summers are truly fecund seasons for musical scribes. Musical routine is far, and the interest free to seize entirely upon each chance.)

Everyone has heard the graceful tune accompanying the entrance of the minnesingers into the Landgraf's feudal hall. It moves at a moderate speed with lyrical trills, through unexpected intervals and sweet unpredictable harmonic progressions; its tones suffused with fervour and lightly mystical aspiration. The small development swings easily upward to the sudden chord of the dominant seventh so effectively used by Wagner; then diminishes slowly in the serene maintainance of the perfect moment, sustained, noble, and relaxed as the gesture of a muse. And, if not all pianists, many folk who play at the piano, know the experience of hearing, while the fingers rest upon the keyboard, a voice speak out of the polished case through the notes of the mechanism, a voice both the sound of the instrument and of a human throat, a human speech fading very quickly in the conscious moment, while the sound becomes again the normal tone of flat ringing stones and struck copper wires. It was this startling phenomenon which repeated itself while I sat delighted by the unfamiliar sound of the instrument and the recovered delicacy of the poignant bit. There it

was again, the strange apparition, the sudden plasticity of the most impalpable of materials, the woman inside the black box speaking low and distinctly through the melody! What brought a particular realization upon the breath of the fleeting minute was the unusual circumstance that the murmuring came so distinctly through the music that I thought to distinguish the look of the person. It was a look simultaneously spiritual and passionate, tender and permeated by an ideal longing. From beneath the eyelids came the blue light which thrills and at the same time stabs; the wondrous searing expression of yearning for a thing finer, more intense, more filled with the fire of the ghost than anything to be found upon earth; moulding body and spirit single.

By the relation of the expression to the chromatic, aspiring element of Wagner's style, by the incarnation of his characteristic tone, I thought to recognize the regard which haunted and moved Wagner throughout his life, the look of the waiting woman. It was the expression of the woman whose spirit, presence, idea is felt in all his art, waiting, her entire being spanned in tender, almost painfully intense watchfulness for the unknown comer. Figured in different instances as Senta and Sieglinde, the sleeping Brünnhilde and Kundry, her presence is felt not only when the curtain is up upon the scene. When there is no scene, the music is full of her. Certain interludes, the second in the first act of *Götterdämmerung*, evoke her bodily before the scene begins. Assuredly, the composer was aware of her identity in all her different incarnations; once he confessed that each of his actions embodied the relations of the same single pair of people, endlessly continued.

Rigorous psychoanalysts will interpret this haunting image as Wagner's mother-imago, fixed in the pose of attendance upon the birth of the posthumous child. Is it not equally possible that it was an idea older than the picture of a particular individual, into which the mother of the child's experience merely happened to fit? The ideal Wagnerian woman, awaiting a new element coming into life—was she indeed anything other than the rib of the man, the ideal opponent each brings with him into the world, and strives to realize out of living material; calls to, struggles toward; and, for the reason Wagner was a man of a particular time, envisaged by him in the forms of Isolde and Mathilda Wesendonck, Eva Pögnier and Cosima Liszt? To perceive in this mystic object

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merely a sexual aim is completely to misunderstand it, so much must it have been a spirit pervading all things, storms and mountains, forest depths and midsummer nights, none the less taking as final reference a particular feminine type. It must have been everything seen and heard by him in terms of the phenomenal and the evanescent, becoming not alone the action, but the music of his operas; style, melody, harmony, orchestration; set down in the half-conscious attempt to embody it in all the aspects in which it appeared to him, and to express and satisfy his eternally reborn desire of this true Platonic idea. "Now Eve," says the Old Testament, "was the mother of All the World," the world as will and idea, we take it; and Schopenhauer and Wagner both would have understood it in that sense. In that divining moment at the unfamiliar instrument, there was an inevitable significance for me in the circumstance that the piece of music which had revealed the ideal Wagnerian woman so distinctly is performed, doubtless for a reason not conscious to the composer, during the entrance of the musician-poets, of whom he felt himself a member, and whose dignity and vocation were strong in him. And in attempting to create the atmosphere of their train, to set forth the impulse and the matrix of the fine rivalry in song, the tournament of love, the high poetic function, a musical inspiration brought out of himself song filled with the animating gesture of his muse.

Again I fell to wondering whether all innovations, developments, and intensifications of artistic style of the revolutionary nature of Wagner's, may not eventually be found resulting directly from obscure mutations in the human plasm, registering themselves in new somatic expressions, new gestures, looks, and tones of voice, and demanding new qualities of relationship, new sensitivities, and acutenesses on the part of the sexes? It is certain that sensitive, passionate, spiritual women of the ideal Wagnerian type came into life about the composer and grew conscious of themselves and their emotional forms through his music-dramas. The music threw a kind of bridge; perhaps the need of such bridges is one of the immediate producing causes of good art. Might not D. H. Lawrence, of the men of to-day, be ready to subscribe to this humble point of view? I wondered whether it was the rule that musicians discovered their points of departure in the unconsciously apprehended tones of the voice, painters more in

gestures and facial expressions; all of them relating the whole of life as known to them to the new body and returning to it again. A new approach to the study of the psychogenesis of form seemed to open before me, most auspicious for the commencement of a new season of chronicling! Form conditioned by the looks of living people, born of the body of the composer, poet, painter, critic, and its ideal complement: a dainty dish to set before one's friends! My enthusiasm was somewhat dampened by the recollection of the Frenchman's *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. But not for human beings on the high seas of life, another moment told me. For them the situation is always new and wonderful and terrible. And great artists seem to find their native motion only where the Atlantic raves and swells are mightiest.

PAUL ROSENFELD

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COMMENT

A voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson which humility can teach.

DOCTOR JOHNSON

DOCTOR ELIOT, the President Emeritus of Harvard, regards as our foremost educators during the last 2300 years, Aristotle, Galen, Leonardo da Vinci, Sir Francis Bacon, Milton, Shakespeare, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Sir Isaac Newton, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Advantaged by his fearlessness to choose, one acknowledges that one might choose similarly, and is reluctant to remember that one's predilection for these justly celebrated persons has in some measure been instructed.

Shakespeare perhaps must be excepted. One may not have known him before having seen his plays acted and may yet be sure that from the time one is able to read, to have evaded his intoxicating sovereignty would be impossible. For the most part, however, has not the domination of these ten sages been implicit in that of lesser sages? Has the compactness of Aristotle who, as a schoolmaster, "goeth for the best author," been more alluringly succinct than Roger Ascham's motto, "He who teaches, learns"—*Qui docet, discit*? Emerson's altitude of friendship has seemed to one surely, not less a platitude than the devout firmness of Maria Edgeworth in *The Parent's Assistant*. In Kate Greenaway—a writer and a painter too, like Leonardo da Vinci—one has found an indelible simplicity:

"The King said he liked apples,
The Queen said she liked pears,
And what shall we do to the blackbird
Who listens unawares?"

Has one consciously been more in debt to Galen's subtlety than to Doctor Goldsmith's therapy of man and dog, or less in debt to Luther Burbank whose witchcraft we are told is merely the sun-craft of an observer, than to Sir Isaac Newton? Since, having

been made to understand how five hundred kinds of fruit may be produced on one tree, how white blackberries, stoneless plums, spineless cactus, and sweet lemons may be successfully "designed," one cannot but understand somewhat of the water, of the air, and of the sun which contributed to produce these curiosities. Admiring in *The Adventures of Mr Verdant Green*, Cuthbert Bede's infectious plea for learning, one has become aware of the classic cosmos of Sir Francis Bacon—of "those influences which possess the mind almost imperceptibly and are yet of primary importance in the formation of character," surrounded by which Mr Verdant Green "had to bear contradictions and reproof, progressing in that knowledge of himself which has been found to be about the most useful of all knowledge." Ever within the range of our vision, yet distant—a kind of poetic Mt Everest—Milton's greatness has in certain instances, been less to us than the great simplicity of Isaac Watts; one agrees with Doctor Johnson that, "Every man acquainted with the common principles of human action will look with veneration on the writer who is at one time combating Locke and at another time making a catechism for children in their fourth year." Jacob Abbott's ethical deductions "About Right and Wrong" are perhaps the most potent preparation for Kant's crabbed insistence that "if there is in an act, the least admixture of any motive other than the moral, it loses its moral worth," and general acceptance of the educational ideal, "a sound mind in a sound body," may be attributed as much to the influence of *The Compleat Angler* as to the influence of Locke.

Unmenaced as is the greatness of Doctor Eliot's decemvirs, the unbookish are intimidated by greatness so inclusive. Indeed it is perhaps an imaginary America which pores over either a pre-eminent or a miniature greatness. Rabbi Israel Goldstein deplors the "characterless Apollos and cynical Minervas of our metropolis, whose attitude toward parents is arrogant, toward moral standards flippant, towards duty as such, recalcitrant," and one wishes that our disgracing juniors might exemplify, if not the simplicity of art, the simplicity of artlessness.

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